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ABSTRACT

This report synthesizes information from many sources about state and local Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) evaluation activities and issues. The report's five sections are interrelated, but each can stand alone as a discussion piece on JTPA evaluation. The first section, on the role of evaluation in JTPA, outlines the rationale for doing evaluation, distinguishes evaluation from monitoring, and discusses the range of evaluation options open to JTPA decision makers. The next two sections deal with the organizational context that must support JTPA evaluation activities--section 2 describes the national JTPA framework within which state and local organizations have struggled to develop independent evaluation capabilities, and section 3 examines the specific organization factors that appear most to have influenced how states and service delivery areas have responded to the JTPA evaluation challenge. The fourth section provides information about JTPA evaluation issues that have emerged at the state and local level. The final section highlights conclusions about the status of JTPA evaluation at the state and local level and offers recommendations to policymakers for improving the efforts. Concluding the report are 27 references; a note on the JTPA evaluation design project and the eight-volume set of evaluation guides produced by the project; sources of information for the report; and a directory of state and service delivery area evaluation activities. (KC)

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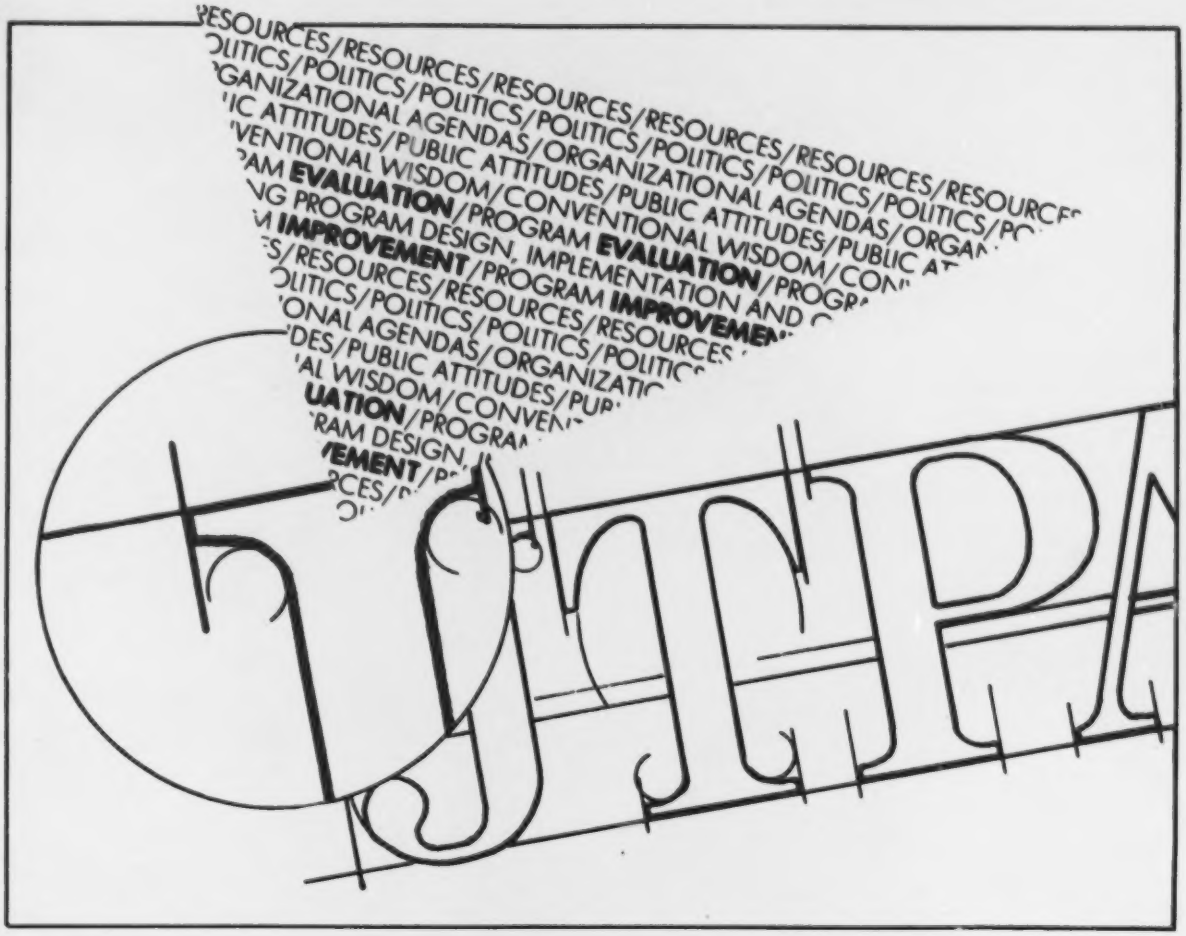
# The JTPA EVALUATION Challenge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# INTRODUCTION

With the inception of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), states and local Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) faced a host of new administrative responsibilities, including the responsibility for evaluating their own program activities. Previously, the federal government had been the predominant actor in the formulation of employment and training evaluation policy, but JTPA created a substantially redefined federal oversight role. Decisions about what to evaluate, how to evaluate, or even *if* to evaluate now devolved largely onto states and SDAs. A central challenge was that many state and local decision-makers had to assume this unaccustomed role with limited experience in evaluation policy-making, research and implementation.

## Purposes Of This Report

After 6 years of program operation, significant barriers to evaluation exist at state and SDA levels, inhibiting the growth of our knowledge about JTPA programs and our ability to plan rationally to improve them. In spite of many hurdles, however, increasing numbers of JTPA organizations are developing evaluation activities and building specific in-house evaluation capabilities and expertise. The overarching purpose of this report is to synthesize what we have learned from many sources about state and local JTPA evaluation activities and issues. Its subsections are aimed at a diverse group of local, state and federal users, including administrators, policy-makers, planners and researchers. Specifically, this report will:

- Explain the role of evaluation as a management tool for improving JTPA programs.
- Examine common barriers to and organizational supports for JTPA evaluation at the state and local level.
- Detail some of the important JTPA evaluation issues that have emerged at the state and local level.
- Provide information about specific evaluation activities conducted by states and SDAs
- Make recommendations for enhancing state and local JTPA evaluation efforts.

## Sources Of Information

The material presented here is derived from a variety of sources. Substantial information originates from activities of the ***JTPA Evaluation Design Project,***[1] an ongoing technical assistance effort begun in 1984. The project's technical assistance efforts have included three main activities related to supporting local and state evaluation initiatives: the production and distribution of a set of evaluation guides for JTPA users; the presenting of regional evaluation training workshops for JTPA professionals; and the development of a national evaluation journal oriented to JTPA practitioners.[2] Through these various activities, project staff, functioning as an informal clearinghouse, have gathered a storehouse of information on various aspects of JTPA evaluation.

Formal data collection efforts of the project include surveys and structured interviews taken over a five year period beginning in 1984. In addition, through its technical assistance activities, the project team has had numerous informal opportunities to gather a range of practitioners' perspectives on the role of JTPA evaluation. Appendix B details those project-related sources of information that have contributed significantly to this report.

Information gathered through Design Project activities is supplemented by some additional sources, including state and local evaluation reports and articles, national surveys and reports on JTPA and miscellaneous publications. Selected sources appear in the references section.

## Structure Of This Report

The report's five sections are interrelated, but each can stand alone as a discussion piece on JTPA evaluation. The first section on the *role of evaluation in JTPA* is intended for readers who are less familiar with evaluation concepts and practices. It outlines the basic definitions of and rationales for doing evaluation, distinguishing evaluation from monitoring.

The next two sections deal with the *organizational context* which must support JTPA evaluation activities. The underlying theme uniting this material is that JTPA political and organizational structures have placed some imposing constraints on states' and SDAs' ability to develop their own evaluation capabilities. Section II describes the *national JTPA framework* within which state and local organizations have struggled to develop independent evaluation capabilities. Section III examines the *specific organizational factors* that appear most to have influenced how states and SDAs have responded to the JTPA evaluation challenge.

An important part of the Project's mission has been to learn about and report on SDA and state evaluation interests and initiatives. What are the most compelling evaluation concerns? How are key information needs being addressed? The fourth section responds to these questions about the substantive evaluation issues of broad interest to states and SDAs. An updated directory of state and SDA evaluation activities contained in Appendix C supplements this section.

In the world of program evaluation research, findings seldom can stand alone. Evaluation users need and expect the research report to link information results to pragmatic decision-making about how to improve programs. Following this same model, the final section highlights the author's conclusions about the status of JTPA evaluation at the state and local level and offers recommendations to policy-makers for improving this status.

[1] The JTPA Evaluation Design Project has been supported since 1984 by a consortium of public and private funders. The project's history, funders and activities are detailed in Appendix A.

[2] The journal, *Evaluation Forum*, is an ongoing Design Project activity. See Appendix A for more information.

SECTION I

# Why Evaluate?

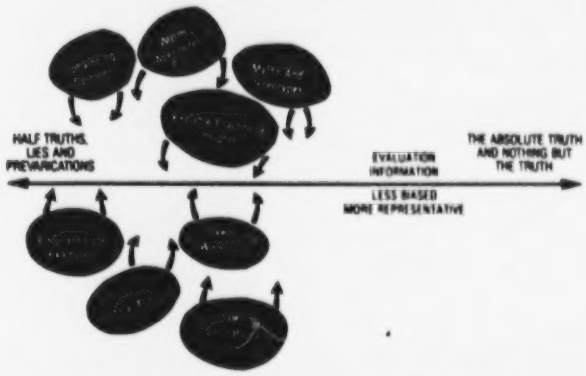
Given the tough choices JTPA administrators face in allocating scarce program resources, the absence of a groundswell movement to evaluate is not surprising. If states and SDAs are to take up the challenge to evaluate, JTPA decision-makers and practitioners must be convinced that evaluation is a wise program investment. However, for perhaps the majority of JTPA professionals, notions about what constitutes evaluation remain vague. In the practitioner world, negative images about evaluation research persist - that evaluation is too technical, too abstract, too likely to be abused, misused or unused, or that it is redundant to the evolving system of JTPA performance standards within which everyone must operate.

Before examining the JTPA evaluation context, it is important to address some of these negative stereotypes by underscoring the unique and positive role evaluation can play in the JTPA management system. Since evaluation has come to mean many different things and has often been loosely applied to *any program assessment activity*, we begin with defining the term.

## Evaluation As Truth Seeking

Evaluation, most simply put, is a mechanism to bring us closer to the truth about what is happening in our programs - closer than non-evaluation sources allow us to come. The diagram below may help illustrate this point. At one end of the continuum is the absolute truth; at the other are outright lies. For managers and policy-makers interested in improving JTPA, the ideal is to discover the truth about their programs - what is working well, what is not and why - so that they can improve them.

THE TRUTH CONTINUUM


HALF TRUTHS, LIES AND PREVARICATIONS
EVALUATION INFORMATION
THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH
LESS BIASED MORE REPRESENTATIVE

As the continuum illustrates, we can turn to many sources of information about our programs. Some sources we reject outright because we know they cannot accurately reflect the truth to us. Other sources we are more likely to depend on to inform decision-making about programs. However, there is a reason why all the non-evaluation sources are clustered towards the left end of the continuum. *None of these sources present information which is systematically collected in a way to control or account for bias* - bias which may be distorting the program picture we are being presented. Thus, anecdotal stories, or individual cases, or our own subjective experiences with the program may be helpful in providing certain insights and focusing and refining our program inquiry, but we cannot be sure that such information gives us a truly representative picture of the program.

*Evaluation* contrasts with these other sources of information in this important way: it involves the *systematic* collection and analysis of information about how efficiently and effectively program goals are being met: i.e., the collective goals specified in the authorizing legislation and the additional goals defined by individual program administrators.[1] A "systematic" study approach is defined by research principles and practices; adhering to these principles and practices allows us the luxury of having a higher level of confidence as to how accurate, unbiased and representative our findings about the program are. Information from other sources may appear less costly and more immediately accessible, but it does not afford us the same level of confidence.

## A Pragmatic Management Tool

Evaluations of employment and training programs have not always been timely, understandable or useful to those involved in running programs. The shortcomings of past research have undoubtedly contributed to the practitioner's stereotype of evaluation as an esoteric research exercise. However, when program administrators or policy-makers initiate and oversee the evaluation process, they have the opportunity to mold evaluation into a *pragmatic management tool* that informs their own decision-making. The chief role of state and local JTPA evaluation, if it is to be truly useful, is to respond to the most important information needs of key users - those who plan, direct and implement JTPA programs.

To have maximum impact as a catalyst for program improvement, evaluation activities need to be fully integrated into ongoing planning and policy-making, as opposed to being tacked on to these activities as an afterthought. Evaluation that is clearly linked to these decision-making processes provides an important information feedback loop to management, policy-making and program innovation.[2]

## Evaluation Vs. Monitoring

It is important to draw a distinction between evaluation and monitoring. Monitoring is the way we determine compliance with administrative policies and procedures - those set forth in the federal Act and also those established

at the state and local levels. In contrast, evaluation's central purpose is to answer our *specific questions* about the *effectiveness and efficiency* of the program in meeting its goals.

At times this distinction may seem a little fuzzy. As we move along a continuum from monitoring for compliance to evaluating for program improvement, large grey areas confront us. For example, what about the systematically collected information for performance standards? Why are we not evaluating our programs when we determine our level of compliance with these standards?

In utilizing a standardized set of performance measures, we are sliding into evaluation territory. The way this systematically collected information has been used, however, is principally as a *compliance tool*, not an *evaluative tool*. The measures are used to answer a narrow set of federally and state mandated questions about whether a program has met its hurdle rates. These performance measures do not tell us, in and of themselves, whether we are meeting the broader goals of JTPA. Knowing whether or not we comply with the standards does not tell us which services for which kinds of clients have produced the resulting outcomes, good or bad. Without knowing this connection between program outcomes, who has been served and how they have been served, we cannot make informed judgements about how to adjust the programs to improve them.

However, the same data collected for compliance monitoring purposes can also serve evaluative purposes. In the evaluation context, we start with our particular questions about the program and put the data to these questions. Rather than being concerned with compliance, we are interested in gaining a more refined understanding of our program in order to make some choices about those programs. *Information for decision-making*, as opposed to information for compliance, *is the distinguishing mark of evaluation.*

## The Range Of Options

In addressing their information concerns, JTPA decision-makers may not appreciate the range of evaluation options open to them. Practitioners need to discard the notion that only the most highly technical and statistically complex research activities constitute "real" evaluation. Pragmatic program evaluation encompasses *multiple options*, ranging from the less technical and more qualitative studies of program processes to the more statistically complex studies of program impacts.

In considering evaluation alternatives, evaluators often make the distinction between two major kinds of evaluations: *process evaluations* and *outcome evaluations*. Process evaluations (sometimes referred to as "implementation studies") focus on the organizational system that delivers services to clients. Is the system delivering quality services effectively? Who is receiving which kind of services? Do different parts of the overall system coordinate with each other? [3]

Outcome evaluations focus on the relationships between the program's particular service interventions and quantifiable outcomes for clients, employers and relevant others. Outcome evaluations can involve relatively simple manipulations of JTPA data to develop useful statistical profiles of the program. Alternatively, and depending on what decision-makers want to learn about the program, outcome evaluations can be more technically ambitious, requiring more long-term client follow-up data or data from other administrative systems. If, for example, decision-makers want to know the impacts of JTPA services on clients, the evaluation will have to collect and analyze data on a similar but separate group of disadvantaged individuals who did not participate in JTPA. [4]

In the past, process and outcome studies have tended to be carried out independently from each other. However, when the approaches are combined they can provide complementary information that increases our understanding of a program and how to improve it. For example, if outcome measures suggest a particular program performed well, administrators and planners will want to know what factors contributed to the program's success. In helping to answer the question "what worked?" the complementary process study fills an important information gap.

## Conclusion

Federal evaluations of past job training programs have responded primarily to the particular information and accountability needs of national users, including federal administrators and Congress. They have often been tenuously connected to the immediate concerns of local program administrators. Under the decentralized scheme of JTPA, state and SDA decision-makers have new opportunities and obligations to assess their own programs. In this scheme, evaluation must operate as a pragmatic management tool that provides reliable information to decision-makers in a timely fashion. Useful state and local evaluation activities allow decision-makers to move beyond performance standards compliance monitoring to address a wide range of information needs.

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[1] This is the author's preferred definition, but there is no single definition of program evaluation to which everyone agrees.

[2] Systematic research method and immediate management needs often seem in conflict because managers must frequently produce information results within a short timeframe. This conflict can be substantially reduced by embedding evaluation into ongoing planning processes, so that an organization is not called upon to respond in an ad hoc, piecemeal fashion to each new information need.

[3] In 1986 the JTPA Evaluation Design project produced a series of guides on JTPA evaluation. (Updated and revised material from this series is condensed in a single volume to be published later this year. See Blalock, ed., forthcoming.) Volume III in the series (Grembowski) describes a process approach to evaluating JTPA.

[4] See Simpson and Johnson, Volumes IV and V in the series noted above, for a discussion of gross impact and net impact issues and methods.

SECTION II

# Evaluation Within The JTPA Framework

In the early years of JTPA a tiny portion of states and SDAs were evaluating JTPA. Only a handful had ongoing evaluation activities built into the biennial program cycle. These were largely states and former prime sponsors that had developed an evaluation capability under CETA. Often this capability was sustained through a separate evaluation unit that continued its research activities under JTPA, building on previous experience and findings.

The overwhelming majority of states and SDAs set up JTPA operations without incorporating any evaluation activities into the program planning process. Subsequently, most have encountered difficulties in establishing new evaluation capabilities under JTPA. Frequently, JTPA evaluation has been developed in an ad hoc fashion, in response to specific organizational pressures or concerns, rather than as part of ongoing planning and policy-making. After so many years of program operation, why hasn't evaluation flourished more?

Evaluation does not occur in an organizational vacuum. At each political level of JTPA, a broad spectrum of organizational factors contribute to the capacity to evaluate. A significant part of this organizational context is set by the Job Training Partnership Act itself and the administrative framework created to implement the Act. The question posed in this section is: Does the basic framework of the JTPA system encourage state and local evaluation?

## JTPA's Mandate To Evaluate

The crafters of the Act envisioned evaluation responsibilities to be divided among the different administrative levels of JTPA. At the federal level, the Act *mandates* some fairly specific evaluation-related activities on the part of the National Commission for Employment Policy (NCEP) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), including studying the program's general effectiveness and cost-effectiveness and its adequacy in delivering services and meeting the needs of different target groups. In support of federal evaluation activities, the Act requires DOL to maintain a "comprehensive program of employment and training research." [1]

Under the Act, the individual states also have specific evaluation responsibilities. For example, the Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan is to include an evaluation of the state's JTPA activities. The state council is charged with reviewing not only state JTPA services, but also program operations in SDAs in order to make recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of JTPA programs. [2]

In keeping with the policies of greater local control under the New Federalism, the Act does not define specific SDA evaluation responsibilities, preferring that a definition of local program accountability be worked out in state and local political arenas. However, the lack of clear lines of authority over program oversight, combined with the rhetoric of local control has created in many JTPA settings an organizational tension and ambiguity about how to go about evaluating JTPA. By and large, states have been reluctant to move into a substantive examination of SDA programs for fear of aggravating state-SDA relations. Rather, they have confined their oversight activities to monitoring aspects of JTPA operations for which they feel there is a clear-cut mandate given.

## Limited Administrative Funds

While JTPA legislation generally spells out state evaluation responsibilities and implies local responsibilities, it earmarks no specific resources in support of state and local evaluation efforts. Instead, Congress bestowed to states a patchwork of program set-asides to encourage special administrative activities such as evaluation.

Theoretically, the program's set-aside for technical assistance and incentive awards (the 6% set-aside), constitutes an obvious and appropriate source of evaluation funding for SDAs. Initially, however, many interpreted the Act's language to preclude the use of this pot of money for evaluation not specifically linked to an SDA's failure to meet performance standards. States were hesitant to use the 6% money flexibly for fear they would later be called to task by federal auditors.

Even after the DOL clarified that evaluation as a form of "preventative TA" was a permissible use, 6% monies have been used stintingly to support evaluation. The funds are available for too many other appealing uses, such as bonuses for exceeding performance standards. Many SDAs have come to rely heavily on these extra monies for supplemental funding of direct program services. Similarly, the education and coordination set-aside (8% monies), and the older workers program set-aside (3% monies) generally flow into program uses perceived to be more immediate than evaluation. [3]

Another important structural feature of JTPA is fairly strict caps on administrative spending at both the state and SDA levels. For many states and SDAs these limitations translate into a bare bones administrative approach, where only the essential and required oversight activities are performed. Evaluation in the JTPA context is not a program "essential." While evaluation is a mandated state

oversight function, the system exerts few institutional pressures or offers few rewards to evaluate. It is relatively easy for states to ignore the evaluation mandate in favor of more pressing requirements and responsibilities. In this respect, *the requirement to evaluate sharply contrasts with the requirement to monitor performance standards outcomes.*

## Performance Standards

A unique aspect of the JTPA system is its reliance on national performance standards as a yardstick for measuring the program's accomplishments. Especially in the early years of the program, performance standards requirements skewed organizational energy and resources away from other program concerns and goals. When surveyed, a significant number of JTPA practitioners and administrators candidly admitted that meeting performance standards had supplanted other program goals to become the preeminent goal (NCEP, Sept. 1988).

As the central and universally adopted program accountability tool, the performance standards system has dramatically overshadowed other program assessment approaches. There are several reasons for this preeminence. First of all, measuring performance outcomes in a specified manner is required of everyone. Regular monitoring of outcomes and an elaborate system of rewards and sanctions for performance has put teeth into the requirement. Moreover, performance standards resonate with business practices for measuring and improving output, making them popular with the private sector and the private industry councils (PICs), which set training policy. Performance standards also have a more general appeal, offering a relatively simple, clear-cut analysis tool that produces quick and unambiguous results: Yes, we met or exceeded standards or, no, we did not. And finally, the majority of SDAs have been "successful" under this system.

Since so much system-wide commitment has been made to performance standards, and so much credence has been placed in them as an accountability and management tool, many state and local JTPA decision-makers have viewed more customized kinds of JTPA evaluation as superfluous. The concept of evaluation as a separate, complementary tool for improving programs simply has not flourished in the shadow of performance standards.

Confusion of performance standards monitoring with evaluation appears widespread among JTPA practitioners as well as council members. In early surveys, JTPA professionals frequently cited *tracking and monitoring of performance in relation to meeting national standards* as a key "evaluation" concern. [4] In regional evaluation workshops, even among a self-selected group largely composed of JTPA technical staff, many participants lacked a basic concept of evaluation as an oversight function distinct from monitoring.

As a result of this confusion, performance standards measures are frequently treated as a stand-in for evaluation and the only mechanism necessary for judging a program's success. For example, a 1986 national survey suggests that most councils have relied solely on performance standards in judging programs and making program decisions (Grinker Associates, July 1986). Performance standards and evaluation experts interviewed for this report concede that the tendency to treat performance outcomes as the only measure of a JTPA program's success is still very widespread, particularly at the SDA level.

While performance standards have dominated the JTPA management scene, they paradoxically have created a program environment that, in the long run, is conducive to evaluation. Monitoring of performance has led to more sophisticated and flexible computerized information systems for the ongoing collection of client and program information, an important prerequisite for evaluation. Many states and SDAs have collected rich data bases and have developed new computer expertise. In the course of working with performance standards, JTPA professionals have gained more of an appreciation of the research complexities involved in data collection and analysis. For example, the widespread debates over the usefulness and fairness of different performance outcomes as indicators of program effectiveness have sensitized staffs to problems in selecting and measuring outcomes and comparing those outcomes across different JTPA programs.

The addition of post-program performance standards has been an especially important stimulus to evaluate. States and SDAs now have the basic data collection systems in place for doing a variety of analyses of both the short- and long-term outcomes for program participants. Given the outlay of resources for client follow-up, it becomes inefficient not to use the information for purposes other than performance standards monitoring. Much more can be learned from follow-up at relatively little additional cost.

## The Federal Role In Evaluation

While the New Federalism approach parceled out many JTPA program functions to states and SDAs, the Act charged the Department of Labor with continuing centralized technical assistance and research activities in support of state and local program evaluation and development. A centralized technical assistance capacity was thought to be crucial to the efficient start-up and functioning of JTPA because the technical capabilities of individual states and SDAs vary so tremendously.

However, top DOL leadership, responding to Reagan administration priorities and pressures, foreclosed federal involvement in JTPA beyond narrow oversight activities. In the 1980s DOL's funding for both research and technical

assistance was drastically reduced and the core staff of federal technical experts effectively eliminated as a force within DOL (Levitan, 1988). The DOL regional offices suffered a similar fate, some regions losing virtually all specialized technical staff. This decimation of technical units made it impossible for DOL to offer the kind of technical assistance leadership that the JTPA evaluation challenge demanded.

More recently, the DOL has moved to play a more proactive technical assistance role. It has supported a number of evaluation efforts, including the sponsoring of evaluation training workshops with several of its regional offices. Using discretionary technical assistance training funds, several regional offices have also independently supported evaluation initiatives through MIS user groups, informational seminars and funding of individual state evaluation projects. However, these efforts have been short-term and unrelated to any broadly conceived federal technical assistance strategy supporting program evaluation.

### Federal Research Role

Prior to the JTPA, the DOL played a key role in sponsoring a variety of evaluation research activities aimed at learning more about and improving employment and training programs. With the onset of JTPA, it suffered a period of drastic retrenchment in research activity.[5] The agency's experience appears to be representative of a widespread erosion of program evaluation and data collection activities throughout the executive branch agencies during the Reagan tenure (USGAO Transition Series, Program Evaluation Issues, Nov. 1988).

More recently, new DOL leadership has lobbied for and received significantly increased support to rebuild a centralized research function. As a result, a variety of new federal evaluation projects has come on line. These projects encompass the study of many aspects of JTPA that have not been previously examined and promise to yield much information useful to state and local, as well as federal program administrators.

The DOL's initial reticence in aggressively pursuing a centralized evaluation capability represents a critically missed opportunity for encouraging evaluation. States and SDAs have not received a *clear and consistent* message from the federal level that evaluation is important to the overall planning and program development process. While a relatively small central staff struggles to administer a great many new research activities, a system for articulating these activities with other JTPA levels has not yet been fully developed. For example, current DOL research activities are not always sufficiently publicized (NCEP, Sept. 1987). SDAs, in particular, are not necessarily aware of these activities, their results and their potential significance to JTPA programs.

Finally, no system for reviewing, testing and disseminating information on model state or local evaluation approaches has been incorporated into DOL's research activities. Each state and SDA has been left largely on its own in coming up with evaluation ideas and approaches - an inherently inefficient approach, especially in the absence of any centralized research information exchange system.

## State Role In Evaluation

The federal Act mandates that states play a key oversight role in the JTPA system. However, state JTPA administrators, on the whole, have not rushed to evaluate their programs. Nor have they provided statewide incentives or supports for their SDAs to evaluate. A number of organizational factors have conspired to mute state response to the JTPA evaluation challenge.

First, state JTPA agencies have faced significant resource constraints on their ability to evaluate. As mentioned earlier, the five percent cap on state administrative expenditures severely limits internal funding options; consequently, many other essential and less risky administrative functions crowd out evaluation.

Maintaining a workable political balance with SDAs has also been a prime consideration. Few states have opted to examine systematically the substantive operations of individual SDAs, for fear of upsetting that balance. Few have considered initiatives to encourage SDAs to examine their own operations more closely. For example, states could choose to use a portion of six percent set-aside funds to leverage greater local level evaluation activity, yet most do not. Rather, a significant portion of these funds flow to a majority of SDAs as incentive awards, creating a strong status quo in favor of this distribution scheme (NCEP, Sept. 1988).

In most states, potential evaluation advocates within the broader state system have not emerged as a force. A likely candidate for this advocacy role is the State Job Training Coordinating Council (SJTCC). As the policy-making body for all state job training initiatives, the Council has clear legislated authority to evaluate. Because its diverse members are not directly involved as a group in the actual administrative and service-delivery system, they theoretically are in a good position to exercise this authority. However, the SJTCCs, by and large, have remained weak institutions, exercising relatively little influence over state policy and oversight practices (Levitan, 1988; National Alliance of Business, 1986). Survey material on JTPA evaluation suggests that few evaluation initiatives originate from the State Coordinating Councils (Blalock, 1988).

Survey information also suggests that state governments have not been active in funding JTPA or in requiring greater program oversight and accountability (Levitan,

1988). In a few states, legislative appropriations for evaluation have been tied to state funding of new work-welfare initiatives. Because these programs are highly visible and often controversial, they constitute a most likely locus for future state-funded evaluations. However, the strong impetus to examine and improve existing JTPA programs is not yet evident in most state governments.

## Conclusion

In designing JTPA, Congress envisioned that both federal and state actors would share the responsibility for evaluating JTPA in order to improve it. However, the legislative mandate to evaluate has been undercut by many specific structural features of JTPA. These features include an almost non-existent funding mechanism for state and local evaluation, an historically weak state council structure, an emphasis on performance standards to the exclusion of other assessment tools and a general lack of program incentives to evaluate.

In addition, the evaluation roles and responsibilities of each level of this decentralized system have not been developed into an articulated whole. As providers of centralized technical assistance, states and the federal DOL generally have been reluctant to take bold, coordinated actions in support of system-wide evaluation.

Despite the built-in constraints of the JTPA system, increasing numbers of states and SDAs are moving beyond performance standards towards expanded evaluation activities. Working with performance standards has created new capacities for collecting and analyzing data and a heightened awareness of the role of research in answering important questions about job training programs.

[1] The Job Training Partnership Act, PL 17-300; 96 U.S. Statutes at Large (322, Section 452).

[2] Ibid, section 122(b)(4).

[3] As this report is being prepared, Congress is considering JTPA amendments to change the structure of administrative set-asides to encourage greater use for technical assistance and organizational capacity-building.

[4] Both Snedeker (1986) and Blalock (1988) found this to be a common survey response. In developing evaluation guides, the Design Project team encountered some difficulty in getting the project's advisory board members and other informants to articulate their evaluation concerns, as distinct from performance standards monitoring issues. A number of project informants felt that the evaluation guides being developed should help them with the DOL regression model for adjusting performance standards. Some advisors to the project went so far as to recommend that the word "evaluation" not be used in the title of the guidebooks because practitioners might not know what to make of the term.

[5] According to Levitan (1988), the DOL research budget was slashed by three-quarters between 1980 and 1987.

SECTION III

# Supports And Constraints To Evaluation: *Specific Organizational Issues For States And SDAs*

In each JTPA setting the evaluation possibilities are uniquely defined by the organizational context. Despite great organizational variation across their state and SDAs, however, JTPA professionals repeatedly pinpoint several key factors characterizing the JTPA evaluation challenge. This section clusters these factors into the following five issue areas:

- Evaluation funding
- Evaluation staffing
- Data requirements for evaluation
- Leadership interest and commitment
- Interagency coordination

The section's central purpose is to define the most critical barriers to evaluation and outline some of the ways state and SDAs have been creatively working to overcome these barriers.

## ISSUE I: Evaluation Funding

Practitioners at all levels of JTPA consistently cite funding for evaluation as one of the severest constraints to designing and implementing useful evaluations.[1] The lack of designated funds for evaluation does not, by itself, doom state and SDA evaluation efforts. However, in the Gramm-Rudman era, where public programs must live under the constant threat of budget curtailments, internal program funding of evaluation grows less and less feasible. On a practical level, using allotted JTPA funds for evaluation is readily perceived as "taking away" scarce resources from other established program activities. On a symbolic level, the lack of evaluation-targeted funds conveys a message throughout the system about the relative unimportance of evaluation as a program management tool. Under such conditions, organizations find it harder to shift internal program resources to support evaluation.

Despite significant budget constraints, some of the larger SDAs and a number of states are funding evaluations directly out of JTPA administrative funds. In fact, the great majority of states conducting evaluation activities appear to have relied heavily on their five percent administrative allotment and in-house staff. Budget circumstances have encouraged the initiation of shorter-term, smaller scale evaluation efforts which can be more readily sustained by in-house staff working with existing data bases - primarily MIS and follow-up information (Bialock, 1988). Decision-makers can justify this funding approach because it so efficiently utilizes information already collected for required monitoring.

However, even the basic, relatively inexpensive data analyses being supported by administrative funds may not be so possible in the future. After this program year, states will no longer be able to use 6 percent (technical assistance set-aside) monies to support required follow-up survey activity. Instead, they will have to squeeze follow-up funds out of their limited administrative pot of money, resulting in even less for evaluation.

The smaller, more rural states and SDAs face special resource barriers. Their programs may be burdened with higher administrative costs, due to lack of economies of scale in delivering services. Geography imposes additional constraints on administrative activities. In a rural setting, program sites are often scattered over large distances, making site visits more costly and time-consuming. An evaluation activity requiring the participation or supervision of such sites imposes substantial burdens on staff time and administrative costs.

Funding constraints are forcing states and SDAs interested in evaluation to explore new sources of support outside the JTPA administrative framework. Some SDAs and a few states have used 6 percent monies to fund evaluation; more might do so if states were to restructure their policies in favor of such a use (see Section II). Increasingly, SDAs seem to be relying on outside community resources, such as local businesses, colleges and universities, as a means of supporting an evaluation effort. Many, for example, have recruited student interns who are interested in gaining research experience. Some have successfully approached local government, corporations, and charitable foundations for assistance in evaluating special demonstration projects.

However, many private-sector funding opportunities have probably gone untapped. According to one national report, two-thirds of all SDAs surveyed received some type of material support for operations from local business (National Alliance for Business, 1985). If the local private sector is generally predisposed to contribute to SDAs, its support would likely extend to specific evaluation activities leading to improved program management and accountability.

States, in relying largely on administrative monies to fund evaluation, have been less inclined than SDAs to seek outside support. For most states wanting to move beyond basic MIS and follow-up analyses however, the

internal monies available are insufficient. A few states have looked to the federal government, state legislatures, and state agencies for special funding of evaluation. At least three states have received technical assistance funds from their DOL regional office to evaluate. While state legislatures have remained relatively uninvolved in JTPA oversight or program issues in general, they have been drawn into specific zones of interest and controversy. Several states are supporting evaluation of new welfare to work programs; others are concerned about youth programs. These and other high profile aspects of JTPA are likely to be prime candidates for legislative scrutiny and evaluation funding in the future.

Evaluation supported through collaborative efforts with other human service organizations remains a relatively unexplored option. Studies suggest that the coordination structures that would be necessary to support such collaboration simply do not exist (National Alliance of Business, 1987). As increasing pressures to coordinate services more efficiently are applied and agencies move to work more collaboratively, interagency funding of evaluation may become a more realistic option for states.

External funding of JTPA evaluation can yield some important side-benefits, such as increased program visibility, improved credibility with the private sector, and new agency or community links. But a collaborative funding effort also requires an additional up-front investment in valuable staff time. Many states and SDAs say they can't make such an investment when they are being overwhelmed by ongoing administrative demands. For the present, inadequate resources will pose an immense barrier to state and local JTPA evaluation efforts; building an independent funding capability for JTPA evaluation will remain an unfulfilled ideal for most.

## ISSUE II: Staff Requirements And Capabilities

How to adequately staff an evaluation is another concern widely shared by state and local JTPA professionals. There are two aspects to the staffing issue: (1) a general lack of staff time and resources ; and (2) a dearth of specialized expertise necessary for planning and carrying out evaluation.

### Stretching Resources

To keep costs low, most states and SDAs have to rely extensively on existing staff resources to shoulder the administrative burdens of planning and carrying out evaluation. In many instances, in-house staff are expected to take on the technical tasks of evaluation design, data collection and analysis, as well. Frequently, the person in charge of evaluation tasks wears many hats, is responsible for many other administrative tasks, and lacks the time to oversee or carry out evaluation. Many evaluation workshop participants lamented being in the position of having the director's blessing (if not enthusiastic endorsement) and the necessary data to evaluate, but never being able to free up enough of their own or other staff's time to follow through.

The *combining of monitoring and evaluation* functions into one unit is a staffing solution towards which hard-pressed states and SDAs naturally gravitate. Program monitors fold broader evaluation-related questions into the compliance review process. While this is an efficient use of existing staff, there are some inherent problems in this approach. First, when the evaluator is also part of the sanctioning authority structure, those being evaluated are going to operate in a more self-protective mode. Information collected under these circumstances may not be the most complete or valid. Evaluator bias is also an issue. While a monitor's familiarity with a program may help sensitize him or her to program issues, it may also work to create a mind set about the program. Pre-conceived notions about a given program may unconsciously bias the evaluator/monitor's examination, analysis and conclusions. Thus, the ultimate utility of the evaluation information may be compromised. [1] The sense derived from regional evaluation workshops is that administrators utilizing monitors to evaluate are largely unaware of these potential biases.

### Insufficient Expertise

Support for evaluation at the state and local level is further stymied by the absence of solid technical expertise. The panel of experts interviewed for this report largely concurred that most states and the overwhelming majority of SDAs currently lack the technical staff to inform evaluation policy, oversee evaluation activities contracted out to others, or carry out competent in-house evaluation themselves (Blalock, 1988; Snedeker, 1986). At both state and local levels, existing technical staff usually have little or no research background. Many are frustrated in the knowledge that they sit on potentially useful data of which they cannot take full advantage.

Prior to JTPA some states and prime sponsors had built in-house research expertise that permitted a certain level of ongoing data analysis and evaluation activity. With reduced administrative funding under JTPA, it appears that many employment and training agencies simply lost much of those capabilities and have been unable to recoup them. To the degree that evaluation expertise resided in separate research units lopped away by the budgetary axe, JTPA state and local administrative entities suffered an organizational set-back parallel to that experienced by the DOL in the early 1980s. Much of the institutional memory and knowledge base regarding evaluation was lost. As one practitioner lamented, "The system was pretty well swept clean of research expertise . . ." leaving few who could effectively lobby for building evaluation into the emerging JTPA programs.

The problem of staff expertise is particularly acute for non-metropolitan SDAs. Outside the more populated urban and suburban areas, JTPA administrative activities are largely carried out by small staffs of generalists. Rural SDAs, which constitute the majority, are at a special disadvantage. Even if funds were available to hire staff with specialized expertise, such professionals would likely be in short supply. Larger SDAs have greater access to outside technical expertise residing in local colleges, universities, large businesses and professional organizations. Many rural JTPA agencies would have to import evaluation expertise from some distance away, at a prohibitive cost.

Since people with technical research skills and orientation have continued to be in short supply throughout the JTPA system, the *research perspective* has not been well represented. Both administrative staff and policymakers frequently lack an appreciation of the importance of basic research principles in developing useful information. In too many cases, untrained staff design, carry out and report on evaluation activities. Decision-makers leap to policy conclusions which are not necessarily warranted by the information they are presented. For example, prior to the post-program reporting requirement, a medium-sized SDA undertook a fairly extensive follow-up effort involving a major investment of resources. The SDA's study utilized a large, *non-random* sample of clients so that the results were not necessarily representative of the larger client population. Nonetheless, the SDA treated the sample findings as if they were representative, drawing broad conclusions from the biased information and basing program changes on those conclusions. [3]

The states and SDAs most successfully incorporating evaluation into their ongoing program operations appear to be those that had developed technical staff resources under CETA that survived the transition to JTPA. These have been primarily the larger, urban states and SDAs which enjoy distinct financial and geographic advantages. They are organizationally capable of sustaining a separate evaluation unit whose staff are unencumbered by other responsibilities, such as monitoring, that could conflict with or compromise their evaluation duties. Specialized staff have not only made evaluation more feasible, but they have also influenced organizational thinking and direction in favor of evaluation.

## ISSUE III: MIS Data Requirements

In the human services field, the JTPA Management Information System (MIS) is considered one of the better data collection systems and, as such, is a key support to state and local evaluation activities. Because each state developed its system independently, MISs nationwide are diverse. While dissatisfactions with some systems remain, the general sense is that MISs overall have improved significantly in terms of permitting greater *accessibility* and greater *flexibility* for state and local users interested in evaluation. [4]

### New Technical Supports For Evaluation

Accessibility to client information has been a point of friction between states and SDAs. In early JTPA surveys, SDAs expressed fairly widespread dissatisfaction with the more centralized state-controlled systems. SDAs felt they did not have enough say in the kinds of data elements collected, resulting in statewide systems that were not responsive enough to their individual information needs (National Alliance for Business, 1985). In the more centralized systems, SDAs also complained about their inability to access information from state mainframe systems in a timely fashion. The cumbersome information retrieval process created a disincentive for SDAs to fashion their own program analyses. Some states also have been limited in only having access to aggregated SDA records.

Technical improvements in MISs, however, have created a much more supportive climate for evaluation, particularly at the local level. More systems are utilizing PCs, making information more accessible to a variety of users. Innovations in software are allowing for better tracking of client flow information and increased detail on client services offered. For example, more SDAs have the ability to easily add new variables to their MIS program and more flexibly respond to new information needs as they arise.

Many states and SDAs are now collecting client MIS data on a wide range of variables, far beyond what is required for federal reporting. These well-established information systems are an important pre-requisite for JTPA evaluation. However, their potential in supporting evaluation has not been widely realized: Much information is being collected, but it is not being broadly used in a systematic fashion to inform decision-making. While a number of organizations conduct analyses of MIS data, these are often of a limited nature and are not necessarily clearly linked to decision-makers' priorities.

The overriding barrier to using the MIS more fully as an evaluation tool appears to be organizational. Especially at the local level, lack of specific MIS and computer expertise is a serious problem. The systems are capable of generating and analyzing the information that might be needed, but the people are not trained to take advantage of these technical tools. A significant number of SDAs do not have the staff capability to do even very basic descriptive analyses. [5]

### Data Quality

The more decentralized a service delivery system is and the more layers of staff involved in recording, classifying and entering data, the greater the potential for error. Some researchers suggest that lax data quality control procedures diminishes the ability of states and SDAs to produce useful evaluation information. Until JTPA organ-

izations enter into more sophisticated analyses requiring outside expertise, they may not identify data quality as an issue. Again this oversight goes back to the lack of staff expertise generally available within JTPA. Evaluation is enhanced by staff who understand the requirements imposed by a research framework, including the need for careful editing procedures to ensure that the data collected is of sufficient quality as to be useful.

## Data Comparability

Related to the issue of data quality is the concern for *data comparability*. A study of the JTPA data collection system found that federal definitions for the required reporting system are so broad that data across states and SDAs "cannot be reliably interpreted or compared" (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986). Concern is focused primarily in two areas: *outcome-related information* and *program services-related information*.

Concerns about the comparability of outcome information are most frequently voiced at the SDA level, where non-comparable definitions of performance standards measures becomes an equity, as well as a research issue. For example, under federal reporting guidelines, a JTPA client merely has to work one day in unsubsidized employment to be counted as a placement. Some states maintain more rigorous definitions of what constitutes a "placement;" others allow individual SDAs to determine the definition (JTPA Advisory Committee, 1989). When state incentive bonuses are linked to exceeding performance standards, those SDAs opting for a more stringent definition of placement feel at a competitive disadvantage. Similarly, SDA youth competency systems vary significantly in terms of what competencies are included and how attainments are defined.

In contrast, reporting of program services is not linked to the reward structure of the performance standards system. As a result, non-uniform definitions of program services across subcontractors, SDAs and states creates little controversy. Practitioners report wide discrepancies in the definitional treatment of client services such as OJT, classroom training or work experience. However, practitioner observation of these discrepancies does not necessarily translate into concern over the measurement issues these discrepancies create for evaluation. The measurement problem is articulated more by researchers than practitioners. [6]

# ISSUE IV: Leadership Commitment To Evaluation

While lack of funding and technical resources pose obvious and difficult barriers to JTPA evaluation, the inability or unwillingness of leadership to commit available resources to evaluation is also at issue. Political commitment of decision-makers to evaluation is an essential pre-requisite. When key decision-makers buy into the evaluation process, the evaluation will more likely be better supported, both fiscally and organizationally, and produce useful information that will be used to improve programs, rather than languishing in someone's file drawer. While evidence from many sources suggests there is a growing appreciation of evaluation's contribution to program development, many practitioners feel that lack of top-level understanding and support for evaluation is still a major impediment. [7]

## Failure To Appreciate Evaluation As A Pragmatic Tool

JTPA decision-makers hesitate to give evaluation sufficient priority and funding support for a number of reasons. First, many do not have a clear conception of evaluation as a pragmatic tool for informing their decision-making. Rather, evaluation is still widely misperceived as only encompassing highly technical statistical exercises with little practical program application. Particularly on the SDA level, decision-makers are skeptical about the ability of the evaluation process to provide useful information. Instead, evaluation is frequently associated with monitoring and sanctioning - something unwelcome that is imposed by an outside authority. (See the discussion on performance standards in Section II.)

Even in those organizations that currently support evaluation, program planners and decision-makers may not appreciate the range of evaluation options available to them. Program managers frequently lack, and therefore cannot convey to the organization a strong sense of how evaluation fits into the overall planning and management context of the program (Blalock, 1988). As a result, evaluation is tagged onto a particular project because the funder requires it or because people feel it "looks good." In such a context, the full benefits of evaluation are not realized because the evaluation planning process has not evolved from decision-makers' central information needs.

## Political Risks Of Evaluation

While the benefits of evaluation may be obscure to JTPA decision-makers, its political risks are not. As a potential instrument for organizational change, evaluation presents an inherent threat to vested organizational interests. If the organizational rewards for evaluating are not clearly evident, decision-makers will have a difficult time accepting its risks. Evaluation workshop attenders frequently voiced the concern that results could be misrepresented or misinterpreted by program critics and the press. That evaluation results might expose program weaknesses and be politically embarrassing is a particularly compelling concern for politically appointed leadership.

These risks may be heightened in a performance-driven system like JTPA, where the central pressure is to meet and/or exceed national performance standards. At times, this pressure translates into an incentive to evaluate.

For example, when an SDA fails to meet expected performance levels, the risks of evaluation are likely to be overshadowed by the urgency of boosting performance. However, historically, most SDAs have met or exceeded most standards. Because both states and SDAs have marketed JTPA to the public in terms of their programs' performance successes, great risks may be attached to evaluation activities that delve more substantively into the workings of a program. What if evaluation reveals program information that contradicts or undercuts the marketed image?

As a means of judging a program, performance standards resonates with the political context in which JTPA leadership must operate. If outcomes are low, the system can gear up to correct performance within a relatively short period of time. If performance outcomes are high, there is no incentive to open up a potential can of worms by evaluating. In contrast, the evaluation process usually operates on a longer timeframe. Program weaknesses that an evaluation might uncover may require a substantial investment in time and resources to correct. However, politics favor a short term solution because the political leadership may not otherwise survive. JTPA leadership find it difficult, "in the short-term political environment, to put a positive gloss on (less than positive) evaluation findings. Therefore, we don't evaluate," explained one practitioner. [8]

Despite these political constraints to evaluation, JTPA decision-makers are giving increasing priority to evaluation as an important component of ongoing program management for a variety of reasons. First, the relatively successful maturing of the program over the past several years has allowed decision-makers some breathing room. With maturation has come some measure of security. Compared to CETA, JTPA programs have been allowed to develop in a fairly stable political environment without being subjected to the kinds of criticisms and public controversies its predecessor endured. In working within a performance standards framework, decision-makers have developed a greater comfort level with the idea of routinely measuring and assessing program activities. Interestingly, political considerations have also clearly influenced some leaders to expand evaluation activities and fully exploit the positive results as a marketing and public relations advantage. Others have consciously used evaluation as a strategy for obtaining increased state funding.

New pressures to examine both program processes and outcomes more closely are surfacing from many quarters. Increasingly, decision-makers are asking or are being asked questions by local interest groups, legislatures and congress, which performance standards alone cannot answer. Who is the program serving? What services are being provided to different client groups? Is JTPA training effective in the long term? The more persistent these questions, the more risky the decision not to evaluate.

## ISSUE V: Interagency Coordination

Coordination of services has become a watchword among providers of human services. In emphasizing coordination, JTPA reflects national concern for encouraging more efficient and cost-effective delivery of a range of services. The Act earmarks specific funds for improving coordination, establishes state coordinating councils and charges them with planning and overseeing a coordinated job training system. Nonetheless, genuine coordination within JTPA and among other significant human service agencies, such as welfare, Employment Service and vocational education, remains an elusive goal (National Alliance of Business, 1987; JTPA National Advisory Committee, 1989).

### State-SDA Relations

Historically, a significant number of SDAs have been dissatisfied with certain information gathering and oversight activities of state JTPA offices. In the start-up phase of JTPA, as many as two-fifths of SDAs characterized their state JTPA administration as overly prescriptive in their requirements of SDAs (National Alliance of Business, 1985, 1986). SDAs have felt burdened by state imposed reporting systems designed principally to meet state, rather than SDA information needs (NCEP, Sept. 1987). More recently, some SDAs have also complained that states have developed follow-up systems with insufficient local input. The failure to work cooperatively on basic information requirements and systems has set a negative precedent for cooperating around evaluation. [9]

While some states have exerted centralized authority over the system, others have opted for a very passive, nondirective leadership style (Levitan, 1988). This more laissez-faire approach to management, while perhaps superficially more respectful of SDA program autonomy, is not necessarily more conducive to state-SDA collaboration around administrative concerns such as evaluation. Each level may continue to conduct its affairs in relative isolation from the concerns and input of the other.

The inability of certain states and SDAs to create a strong partnership has hampered the development of evaluation at both levels. At a very basic level, insufficient communication between states and SDAs translates into missed opportunities to learn from and build upon each other's evaluation experience. SDAs, for example are sometimes completely unaware of even major state evaluation initiatives. Some states routinely send copies of data analyses to SDAs, but SDAs may be unable to extract potentially useful information from these reports and apply it to their programs. Similarly, state practitioners are frequently unfamiliar with SDA evaluation concerns and activities which could inform state policy-making.

The failure to share information around evaluation issues has probably contributed to states' general reluctance to enter into a technical assistance role geared towards enhancing SDA evaluation capabilities. Many states have tended to assume that the majority of their SDAs will not be interested in evaluation as a program management tool. [10] It is true that few SDAs seem eager to involve states any more than they already are in an examination of the service delivery system. To say SDAs want no state involvement in local evaluation, however, would be misreading their concerns. In evaluation workshops, SDA representatives repeatedly indicated they would welcome greater state technical assistance, providing that TA was not specifically tied to monitoring activities.

The issue of better state-SDA communication and coordination around JTPA evaluation is not easily resolvable. The difficulty stems in large part from the inherent division of interests and outlooks which has historically discouraged active sharing and cooperation. Even with goodwill on all sides, coordination requires a substantial investment, at least initially, of staff time and resources, which are at a premium. Those states and SDAs that have worked collaboratively in developing and using MIS and follow-up systems have created an important foundation for collaborating around evaluation. In this context it is far easier to move from informal information sharing about evaluation issues and activities to more formally coordinated efforts.

## Federal-State Coordination

In a decentralized federal system like JTPA it is especially important that the roles and responsibilities of each administrative level be well-defined and coordinated, both to ensure system-wide accountability and to maximize program effectiveness. In areas such as evaluation research, technical assistance and capacity building, the federal level, with its centralized resources, is in the best position to initiate a systemwide framework for supporting these activities. As described in Section II, however, the DOL has played a limited role in creating and coordinating these kinds of supportive structures for state and local evaluation.

Lack of conscious coordination policies around evaluation research activities results in an uneven information flow to practitioners in the field: whether or not JTPA professionals learn about relevant research activities and results depends on the initiative of individual federal, regional DOL, and state administrators, rather than a well-articulated central system for disseminating such information through these levels. Similarly, coordination mechanisms for relaying evaluation-related information from the field up to regional offices and to Washington D.C. need to be better developed in order to inform federal decision-makers.

## JTPA Links To Other Systems

The degree of coordination a JTPA agency establishes with other human service organizations also affects its evaluation options and perspectives. Agencies that share a client base with JTPA, such as welfare, ES and educational institutions, are important potential supporters of evaluation, who might share technical expertise, financial resources and political risks. However, lack of communication, mistrust and competition frequently characterizes the interagency context in which JTPA operates. This context has discouraged JTPA from exploring collaborative opportunities for expanding program evaluation.

Because outside agencies often control access to important client or program information, practitioners interested in evaluating are focusing increasing attention on the issue of *coordinating data sharing across agencies.* While JTPA client information will be at the core of most JTPA evaluations, supplemental client information from other systems such as Unemployment Insurance (UI) and welfare can permit a more sophisticated examination of pre- and post-program client employment, earnings, and welfare dependency. Information from vocational educational agencies, schools and the Employment Service (ES) can provide a more complete picture of JTPA clients' training and educational experiences and attainments.

Barriers to linking JTPA with other information systems operate on many levels. In a majority of states, technical barriers predominate. Separate data bases have been independently established and maintained by different agencies, using separate computer systems with limited capabilities for communicating with one another. The task of merging JTPA client information with client records from UI or welfare or other agencies may be so technically cumbersome as to discourage the effort.

The relatively few states and SDAs that have the hardware capabilities for merging data still face definitional problems in working across different information systems. Many non-comparable definitions of client variables are imbedded in the various congressional acts authorizing individual programs. For example, the concept of "disadvantaged person" is defined more narrowly in the vocational education system than in JTPA. The ideal of having uniform key definitions across programs would require extensive rewriting of national legislation.

Often the problems of merging data systems are couched in technical terms, but frequently the real issue is organizational turf. Those in control of information do not see a compelling reason or benefit in making it accessible to other agencies. Evaluators have many horror stories to tell regarding the difficulty of obtaining client information across agencies. Client confidentiality, for example, is often raised as a barrier by agencies asked to share their data. At times state agencies have had to engage in

lengthy negotiations to arrive at administrative agreements for obtaining necessary client information. An individual SDA wishing to obtain client information from a non-JTPA state agency would be at an even greater disadvantage.

The national push for better coordinated human services translates into a positive support for improved links between information systems. Some states are moving to merge ES and JTPA services under one roof, completely integrating the two agencies' operations, including their respective information systems. New work-welfare reform legislation is generating specific pressures in many states for welfare and JTPA agencies to do a better job of sharing program information. With state legislatures focusing on the accountability of these new programs, welfare and JTPA agencies have a more compelling interest in exchanging information.

## CONCLUSION

Lack of funding, limited technical expertise and uncertain leadership support for evaluation have imposed considerable constraints on the ability of state and local JTPA organizations to develop their evaluation capabilities. The smaller, more rural SDAs face additional barriers to evaluation in terms of greater isolation from technical and organizational resources, higher administrative costs and more limited opportunities for staff and administrative development.

Despite these constraints, increasing numbers of states and SDAs are incorporating a variety of evaluation activities into their management and policy-making systems. Key organizational supports for evaluation include technical staff who are familiar with evaluation research concepts; strong council and/or administrative interest in evaluation as a management tool; access to low-cost technical assistance; a stable political environment; collaborative support from other agencies and/or the private sector; and easily accessible information systems designed to support a broad range of assessment needs. As these supports have developed and evaluation has become more institutionalized with JTPA, the evaluation issues of interest to states and SDAs have become more clearly defined. The final section takes a closer look at current evaluation topics influencing state and local evaluation activities.

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[1] Not only is evaluation funding mentioned as a key issue in the Snedeker and Blalock surveys of JTPA practitioners, but it also figured predominantly in the author's recent interviews with JTPA experts and in the regional evaluation workshop discussions. See Appendix B for a description of these latter sources.

[2] Vermont's difficulties in using monitors to evaluate are described in the first issue of *Evaluation Forum*, September 1987. One SDA reports addressing the problem of bias by contracting with another SDA's staff to do an evaluative review of its service delivery system.

[3] From JTPA Evaluation Design Project files.

[4] From author's interviews with a panel of JTPA evaluation and performance standards experts. See Appendix B.

[5] Most of the panel of experts interviewed for this report felt that the inability to exploit existing MIS technology a most siginificant barrier to SDA evaluation and more significant than MIS design or operation by the state.

[6] In order to address the issues of how to describe and measure services, states would have to actively explore service provider practices in the field. However, political pressures would likely militate against states entering into this local preserve.

[7] From practitioner discussions in regional evaluation workshops and from Blalock (1988).

[8] Political change at the top can exacerbate the situation. In some states the JTPA directorship has been characterized as a revolving door of new political appointments. New appointments result in repeated reorganization. The resulting organizational instability is not a conducive environment for evaluation.

[9] According to Levitan, state decisions in this area were in part dictated by pressures to meet federal mandates in a context of great bureaucratic uncertainty about future federal requirements and direction.

[10] In planning evaluation workshops, the author found that state level practitioners tended to underestimate SDA interest in participating in the evaluation workshop; similarly, some federal regional administrators understimated state evaluation interest levels.

SECTION IV

# State And Local Evaluation Issues

State and local evaluation agendas reflect the diversity of JTPA program and administrative contexts across the country. As a relatively new and evolving field of interest, state and local evaluation is difficult to characterize in terms of a well-defined, nationally shared set of priorities.

Since SDA and state users play different administrative roles within the system, we expect distinct evaluation concerns to emerge at each level, and to a certain degree this has occurred. As program administrators and service providers, SDAs have tended to focus more narrowly on performance as it relates to specific service delivery components: Are the delivery systems efficiently processing clients? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What specific elements need to be changed to improve performance outcomes? States, by virtue of their oversight and policy-making role, have tended to ask broader questions about the general nature and effectiveness of JTPA. State evaluations have frequently focused on who is being served, the nature of those services, and the long-term outcomes associated with different training strategies.

These broad generalizations, however, mask significant overlap in state and local level evaluation issues. States also may administer special JTPA programs or demonstration projects for youth, older workers, welfare recipients, or other target groups. As the state administrative role more approximates that of an SDA, its evaluation interests converge with those of local program administrators. As certain SDAs have developed more sophisticated evaluation capabilities, they have expanded the range and depth of their program inquiries well beyond the examination of program nuts and bolts to include MIS and follow-up analyses similar to those which a state might conduct.

Since JTPA evaluation issues tend to resist division along state and local lines, this section categorizes and describes evaluation interests in terms of several broad evaluation issue areas. These areas reflect the more common evaluation questions asked by both state and local practitioners about their programs. [1] The six areas include:

- ▶ Targeting of Services
- ▶ Coordination
- ▶ Program Effectiveness
- ▶ Program Quality
- ▶ Pre-Placement Service-Delivery Policies And Practices
- ▶ Long-Term Client Outcomes

## ISSUE I: Targeting Of JTPA Services

Whether services are being adequately targeted to the populations JTPA was intended to serve is an issue that surfaced early in the program's history and continues to generate interest and controversy. Sustained national focus on the subject of "creaming," the practice of selecting the most job-ready for training, has undoubtedly fueled state and local concerns about targeting, especially in areas of slower growth and higher unemployment where relatively better educated and experienced workers are more likely to join the pool of JTPA applicants (NCEP, Feb. 1988). In order to verify targeting practices and improve policies, many states and SDAs have relied on MIS data as a fairly readily available evaluation tool. Their studies have focused on both *who is served* and *how equitably they are served.*

### Who Is Served? Targeting The Hard-To-Serve

SDAs, as well as states, want to evaluate the degree to which their programs are targeted to the *hard-to-serve,* vs. the more *job-ready.* In studying this issue, program administrators have had difficulties arriving at a clear-cut definition of "hard-to-serve." In its new reporting requirements, the DOL suggests that level of educational attainment, as measured by standardized tests, is an important indicator of the person's current employability status. However, others argue that broader competency measures more reliably distinguish the hard-to-serve population. Still others feel that a combination of identifiable employment barriers, such as long-term welfare dependency, lack of high school diploma, teenage pregnancy, drug problems and other factors, profile the hard-to serve client. [2]

A well-designed MIS, providing information on key client characteristics, is an essential support for exploring the targeting issue. A relatively recent national study of JTPA data collection systems found that MIS information was not "wholly adequate to the task of tracking who is served in the program" (NCEP, 1988 Annual Report). Two data collection problems surfaced: First, federally required data on welfare clients' income and dependents were frequently missing; second, non-required information on critical client characteristics, such as welfare and employment history, was frequently not included in JTPA information systems. These kinds of MIS shortcomings severely limit evaluation options for studying targeting, as well as other evaluation issues. The fact that many organizations cannot adequately track and analyze who they serve underscores the limited consideration given to evaluation needs in the initial designing of information systems.

### Equitable Distribution Of Services

Another widespread evaluation concern related to targeting is *how equitably JTPA services are distributed to different client groups.* State and SDAs are moving beyond reviewing compliance with general targeting requirements to examine the nature of services received by

specific groups. Are certain racial, ethnic or age groups more likely to receive particular kinds of services and not others? Does gender seem to be associated with the kind of training a client receives?

Both states and SDAs have reported that tracking the distribution of types of training by client gender, age, race, or other key client characteristics has helped to pinpoint potential biases and weaknesses in JTPA service delivery systems. Some SDAs, for example, have found that certain minorities are more likely to be assigned to short-term OJT or other forms of less intensive training. State statistical profiles have also uncovered training discrepancies that are linked to gender and race.

A pattern of unequal distribution of services may stimulate new evaluation questions and be the catalyst for more in- depth examination of programs. Are program counselors steering certain client groups towards particular training options? Are contractors' outreach and intake procedures somehow serving a gatekeeping function, discouraging certain groups from participation in particular training programs? Alternatively, are clients self-selecting into different training slots?

This secondary level of questioning as to why apparent discrepancies in services to different groups shifts the study focus from *quantitative to qualitative* measures of program processes. For states interested in this issue, the follow-up system provides a window into program operations, as perceived by the client. Many states have added questions to the standard follow-up interview that probe the client's experiences and perceptions of the program, including the factors that influenced service assignment. SDAs theoretically have more options than most states, in terms of observing, surveying, interviewing or using other methods to systematically examine program processes that may be shaping service delivery patterns. Few, however, appear to have marshalled the resources to do this more complex process study of their operations.

## ISSUE II: Program Quality

A performance driven system provides strong incentives for efficiently processing, training and placing participants, but relatively weak incentives for providing substantive services that lead to greater employability. As the system has stabilized, JTPA managers and policy-makers have shifted some attention from *program performance issues* to *program quality issues.*

Quality issues are associated with two basic questions: What kinds of training do participants receive? What kinds of post-training jobs do they obtain? Both states and SDAs have been wrestling with different approaches to studying these questions.

### Training Quality

From the outset, concerns about the substantive nature of JTPA training services have been voiced. Earlier studies suggested that a significant percentage of training resources were being allocated to short-term training and to placement assistance (Westat, Nov. 1985). Services to JTPA youth were found to be particularly limited in scope and duration and service providers were frequently criticized for operating as "personnel offices for McDonalds."

On the Job Training (OJT) has been a particular focus of concern for both SDA and state administrators. They worry that OJT training quality is highly uneven, that some training slots offer little substantive training, but function more as a subsidized employment program. National studies have echoed these concerns (U.S. GAO, DOL Program Issues, Nov. 1988). These concerns, however, have been tempered by political realities. Pressures to maintain good relations with OJT employers and other training institutions in a community have sometimes constrained SDAs from more explicitly examining job quality issues.

How to best measure training quality, is a central research issue. One of the more widely used strategies for assessing quality of services has been to ask participants directly about their training experiences. Even prior to national requirements for client follow-up surveys, a number of SDAs and states conducted program exit and post-program participant surveys that included measurements of *client satisfaction* with the training received. States and SDAs have now incorporated similar questions into their standard follow-up interview. A potential limitation of these surveys is that they tend to underrepresent *program drop-outs. Program completers* tend to report high levels of satisfaction with training, regardless of the services they have received. Another tack taken at the SDA level is to *survey employers* about their levels of satisfaction with the job performance of participants and their perceptions as to the adequacy and relevancy of training of participants.

Another approach to measuring training quality involves examining client training records stored in the MIS, although this is not an option for all. As with so many other evaluation topics, the adequacy of the MIS determines the degree to which program quality can be studied. Since training information is not included in federal reporting requirements, the quality and scope of available MIS program information varies tremendously across systems. To establish measures of quality, a system frequently has to enhance MIS intake and reporting procedures to include more refined information about duration, intensity, and sequencing of services. These refinements permit a more honest appraisal of the instruction, testing, and counselling or other services individuals receive.

## Job Quality

Theoretically, job quality reflects training quality. We expect appropriately targeted, well-designed quality services to result in improved employment options for participants. While the causal link between training and resulting employment can only properly be established through a net impact evaluation, studies of post-training employment provides important clues to managers about the program's training and placement functions.

What percentage of participants end up in low-paying, unskilled, "dead-end" jobs that are not going to lift them out of poverty? What percentage end up in higher paying jobs with opportunities for advancement? State administrators, in particular, have felt that addressing these questions is important for both program accountability and for program improvement, statewide and at the SDA level.

A broadly acceptable definition of "quality" employment has proven elusive. Program administrators have attacked the measurement of quality from many angles. They have analyzed, for example, termination data on *wage levels, full vs. part-time or seasonal employment,* and *occupational skill levels.* A few states have explicitly judged job quality by measuring the *adequacy of participant earnings* against actual number of family members a participant has to support. Will the family live above or below established poverty levels? Some have incorporated specific quality measures into their follow-up survey, asking participants about *benefit levels, expectations for raises or promotions* and the degree to which the job is *training-related.* Still others have looked at participants' subjective attitudes towards job placement. How satisfied are they with their initial placement? Why have they left a placement? What are expectations for remaining at the job?

As with studying training quality, these efforts all depend on enhanced data collection systems. Program staff must be trained to categorize and encode job quality information reliably. State level analysis of this kind is only possible if SDAs consistently classify the data on job quality in a comparable manner. Even with uniform statewide measures of quality, states and SDAs need to agree on specific data review procedures to ensure that errors and idiosyncrasies are not creeping into individual MIS operations.

# ISSUE III: Coordination Issues

Coordination issues have an interesting status in the state and local hierarchy of evaluation concerns. Especially in recent years, coordination has been a high profile JTPA program topic. Although the coordination concept is central to JTPA's legislative framework, required state coordination agreements and plans have not functioned as effective vehicles for substantive cooperation across human service organizations. As budget constraints increase, concerns about system-wide inefficiencies and duplications of services have sharpened. Evaluation workshop participants frequently cited the need for improved coordination as a key evaluation issue.

For example, recent federal and state welfare reform seems to have sharpened interest in improving JTPA-welfare coordination. Also, as states place increased emphasis on targeting integrated services to long-term AFDC recipients and other hard-to-serve groups, questions about how to improve JTPA links with educational services are more prominent.

These and other strongly expressed concerns about coordination, however, appear to be infrequently translated into evaluation-related action at the state or local level. In spite of its well-recognized significance, the specifics of the coordination problem have not been well-defined or studied. The same political and organizational agendas that keep players from communicating and cooperating around program activities, in the first place, also interfere with their ability to collectively initiate and support evaluation.

In reviewing practitioners' evaluation interests, the other striking point is the almost exclusive emphasis given to *horizontal,* rather than *vertical* systems of coordination. (See the previous section's discussion on coordination as an organizational issue affecting evaluation opportunities.) While coordination problems between the different levels of the JTPA system are widely recognized, practitioners seldom talk about systematically studying these problems. States and their SDAs, and SDAs and their contractors may complain about their working relationships, but they do not perceive evaluation as a tool for improving them. Improving regional coordination in conjunction with DOL offices has never appeared on the discussion agendas of evaluation workshop participants.

Given the complexities of the organizational landscape influencing coordination, the issue of *how evaluation is initiated and implemented* is preeminent. For example, who conducts the evaluation may be more significant to the parties involved than the substantive coordination aspects the evaluator ends up studying. One PIC reported that the ultimate utility of a partnership study it commissioned rested largely on intense preliminary negotiations and planning with its SDA, resulting in the mutual selection of a neutral outside evaluator. In contrast, in another SDA setting plagued with coordination problems, one agency unilaterally commissioned an outside evaluator to examine the coordination system. Although, in theory, the evaluator was an independent, neutral observer, he was viewed by those not party to the decision as a biased agent of others. As a result, the evaluator encountered great difficulties in enlisting cooperation and obtaining necessary information.

## ISSUE IV: Pre-Placement Service Delivery Policies And Practices

Increasingly SDAs appear to be complementing analyses of program performance with an examination of *program implementation*. Several years ago local organizations seemed far less oriented towards the systematic self-examination involved in process evaluation (Blalock, 1988; Snedeker, 1986). In the recent survey of JTPA evaluation activities conducted for this report (see Appendix C), a number of SDAs reported that they had contracted with outside consultants to do comprehensive or targeted studies of organizational structures and practices. Evaluative in nature, the purposes of these studies include (1) isolating factors that may be contributing to participation rates of different client groups and their outcomes; and (2) informing service delivery policies of the PICs.

SDA process studies have zeroed in on a range of service delivery concerns, from initial contracting procedures to post-program services. Some of these concerns have already been touched on in terms of targeting, coordination, and training quality. SDAs also seem to be increasingly interested in learning more about how the *early steps in service delivery to clients may be related to participant outcomes and the general quality of the program*. Following is a sample of widely shared evaluation interests related to pre-placement service delivery practices.

**Outreach And Marketing.** SDAs are interested in evaluation tools that will tell them more about the adequacy of their outreach efforts to clients and their marketing efforts to employers and the private sector in general. The issues studied often go beyond simple operational concerns about attracting the requisite number of employers and clients to meet basic numerical goals. Practitioners also want to know how well outreach procedures resonate with targeting policies. Are certain kinds of clients attracted by the organization's publicity efforts? Do others remained untouched by these efforts? Do different efforts need to be taken to attract those most in need of services? Similarly with employers, are certain employers not utilizing JTPA, and if so, for what reasons? Are adequate numbers of employers offering better quality jobs drawn into the program?

**Intake And Application Process.** This next step in service delivery can also be crucial in determining how well services are targeted to particular groups. Do certain application procedures act as a discouragement to segments of the applicant population, resulting in less than optimal targeting? SDAs that keep records on *all* applicants have some basis for determining if there are important differences between enrollers and non-enrollers. Do non-enrollers tend to have more barriers to employment or other significant characteristics that differentiate them from those enrolled?

**Assessment Practices.** As JTPA programs move towards targeting those most in need and offering more long-term and sequenced training, assessment practices become a focal point for closer scrutiny. Not only are practitioners concerned about examining and improving the quality of their assessment systems, they want to know to what degree assessment is well-integrated with the rest of the service delivery system? Are assessment practices appropriate to the client groups being served and the training options provided? Is assessment driving service assignment, or are other factors significantly influencing training plans?

## ISSUE V: Program Effectiveness

In the first years of JTPA, performance standards often did double-duty as program compliance and program effectiveness measures. Many program administrators and council members assumed that high performance, as determined by the standards, was synonymous with an effective program. As the program has matured, states and SDAs have searched for more sophisticated strategies for evaluating program effectiveness, especially in terms of *long-term employment and earnings gains* of clients.

The kinds of questions JTPA organizations ask about the effectiveness of their programs tend to fall into three basic categories. First, they wish to have a firmer basis for judging the *general effectiveness* of JTPA. Does the program make a real difference to participants in the long run? What happens to participants two months, twelve months, or even two years after they are placed? Second, they are concerned about the *comparative effectiveness* of different service strategies. Are certain service interventions more likely than others to enhance the employability and income of participants? Finally, JTPA organizations want to develop better tools for judging the effectiveness of a program against its costs, either in terms of *cost-benefit* or *cost-effectiveness* measures.

### Complexities Of Studying Program Effectiveness

JTPA decision-makers frequently express tremendous interest in measuring program effectiveness. Everyone would like to have concrete, quantifiable measures indicating how much the program has helped people. However, arriving at valid measures of the program's impacts is a more complicated affair than most realize.

Many factors in addition to JTPA services, such as changes in the local economy or participants' educational and employment history, may be influencing program outcomes. In order to measure the true impacts of JTPA on participant earnings, employment, and welfare dependency, evaluators need to sort out the degree to which the JTPA intervention alone affected outcomes. The evaluation

tool for sorting out program effects from other influencing factors is frequently referred to as a *net impact* evaluation or analysis.

## Net Impact Studies

A net impact evaluation answers the question: how much better off are participants than they would have been if they had *not* received JTPA services? In order to answer this question, selected outcomes for JTPA participants need to be compared with those of a similar group of non-participants. The DOL is sponsoring a large national net impact study of JTPA using an *experimental design*. This design entails randomly assigning clients to two study groups: an experimental group that receives JTPA services and a control group that does not.

Most state net impact studies of JTPA have employed a non-experimental design in which a *comparison group* of non-participants is drawn from existing UI wage records. While this is considered to be statistically less rigorous than an experimental design, [3] the comparison group strategy offers program decision-makers some decided advantages (Johnson, 1986). First, it is relatively easier and cheaper to collect data from existing administrative records. Study sites do not have to be as extensively prepared and monitored for proper procedures as they do with random assignment. Most importantly, the comparison group strategy is politically less risky than one that requires withholding services from a segment of the client population.

In JTPA's first program year only one state had instituted a net impact evaluation of JTPA. By 1989, at least five had conducted net impact studies, several had initiated net impact analyses of welfare and youth programs and a number were actively exploring the use of this approach for the future. While these are still relatively small numbers, they suggest a growing state interest in developing increasingly sophisticated evaluation responses to the basic question "Did the program make a difference?"

SDAs often participate in long-term, multi-site net impact studies sponsored by federal agencies and/or private foundations, but only a handful have independently undertaken such a study, usually to assess the effectiveness of a model project. The approach demands a program scale and level of technical resources and expertise only to be found in a small percentage of the largest SDAs.

Even though the net impact approach is primarily suited to state level evaluation interests and capabilities, SDAs and PICs could profit from greater exposure to the evaluation concepts and activities associated with measuring program effectiveness. It appears to be common practice, especially at the local level, to examine gross outcomes and report post-program gains in participant employment and income as if these economic benefits were derived solely from the JTPA intervention. [4] However, in the absence of information on a control or comparison group of similar individuals not participating in JTPA, decision-makers have no way of knowing how much of the positive gain should be attributed to JTPA; participants might have done equally well *without* the program.

## Comparative Effectiveness Of Different Services

JTPA practitioners want better information on the *comparative effectiveness of different service strategies*. Is classroom training more effective than OJT? Is remediation combined with training significantly more powerful an intervention than training alone? Are certain kinds of training going to produce better long-term results for a given client group than for others? Practitioners, particularly at the local level, feel that answers to these kinds of questions will help them shore up weaker service options or better allocate scarce training resources.

In measuring comparative effectiveness, *data comparability* is a key issue. If SDAs or their subcontractor's use widely divergent definitions of services such as OJT, classroom training, or pre-employment training, then the usefulness of aggregate comparisons of these different service categories diminishes. (See the discussion on MIS data requirements in Section III.)

To search for information about comparative effectiveness, organizations often expediently turn to their raw MIS data for answers. However, by themselves, these gross outcomes cannot provide meaningful measures of comparative effectiveness: they do not take into account other factors extraneous to the service interventions, which may be driving the performance differences observed. This issue of bias is especially important if some services tend to be assigned disproportionately to hard-to-serve client groups or if some contractors disproportionately enroll such groups. A comparative analysis that does not protect against these selection biases will likely be more misleading than valuable.

Developing *valid* comparisons of service strategies or contractors involves more sophisticated statistical procedures for sorting out the differential effects of these strategies, apart from other influences on client outcomes (Simpson, 1986). While the issue of comparative effectiveness is paramount for many states and SDAs, most do not currently have staff with the requisite statistical expertise. Even limited outside technical assistance would strengthen state and local approaches to this key evaluation issue.

By relying on gross outcomes alone as measures of effectiveness, decision-makers are misled about the strengths and weaknesses of a given program, service, or contractor. A program or service strategy that looks great, according to gross outcome measures, may actually be contributing little or nothing to participants' economic gains. Conversely, a program showing unimpressive outcomes may be significantly enhancing the employability and earnings of participants compared to how they would have fared without the training intervention.

## Cost Effectiveness And Cost Benefit

The push to evaluate JTPA's effectiveness in terms of its costs and benefits to society often comes from the private-sector-oriented PICs. Recognizing the importance

of cost analysis in the business world, PIC and SDA leadership has been keen to develop analogous methods for judging JTPA outputs against training investments.

Local level JTPA organizations want two kinds of cost analysis tools. PIC representatives appear most interested in cost benefit information that demonstrates JTPA's "return on investment," as called for in the Act. Do the economic benefits of JTPA, as measured by higher wages, increased tax contributions, and reduced welfare expenditures, exceed the costs of the training investment? SDA administrators are concerned with comparing the cost effectiveness of different service strategies. Which strategy produces the best results per dollar invested?

As with other effectiveness issues discussed above, in examining return on investment, a large conceptual and technical gulf frequently separates what practitioners need and want to know and what their current evaluation capabilities allow them to discover. In order to develop valid estimates of the program's benefits, practitioners must first implement a *net impact analysis* to separate out the economic gains due to the program alone. Similarly, comparative cost effectiveness measures must be derived from a statistically sound comparison of different service strategies. These kinds of analyses are beyond the technical reach of the vast majority of SDAs. However, organizational pressures to come up with financial assessments of the program persist, often compelling administrators to take methodological shortcuts.

## ISSUE VI: Long-Term Client Outcomes

The above discussion suggests that while the interest in evaluating JTPA effectiveness is genuine and widespread, the technical and organizational infrastructure for doing so is largely absent, particularly at the local level. Where does this leave states and SDAs searching for better information on their programs? As an alternative to more complicated studies of effectiveness, many are depending on *expanded follow-up systems* explicitly designed to support the evaluation of long-term client outcomes. As well as adding information areas to the mandated 13-week follow-up survey, some organizations are *extending the time-frame for collecting participant information* to 6 months, one year or longer. Expanded follow-up surveys and related post-program studies offer promise as comparatively inexpensive, widely accessible tools for learning about JTPA.

While follow-up outcomes do not define program effectiveness, *per se*, they offer potentially useful *performance indicators* of how well the program is working. JTPA managers are using follow-up information to answer these types of questions:

- What are the long-term employment retention and wage rates of participants and specific target groups?
- Over time, what level of welfare and personal income do participants receive?
- What percentage of participants has received a promotion or an increase in wages and benefits?
- Which services for which client groups are associated with better long-term outcomes?
- How do long-term outcomes compare across contractors?

Information addressing these questions can be extremely useful in highlighting performance that diverges from the expected outcomes. It can pinpoint areas of potential strength and weakness and suggest new avenues for further investigation.

### Pre- And Post-Program Earnings Studies

The comparison of participants' employment and earnings experience before and after training is another evaluation strategy many states are exploring.[5] The approach demands some customizing of intake procedures to include more extensive employment histories of JTPA applicants. Alternatively, evaluators may depend on non-JTPA administrative data, principally UI and welfare, to enrich their JTPA information base. Such information permits evaluators to establish reasonable baseline measures against which long-term post-program employment and welfare-related outcomes can be compared.

A major deterrent to pre- and post- program studies appears to be the technical and organizational difficulties of accessing the necessary UI and welfare records of participants and merging them with JTPA records. Until the separate administrative systems controlling these records improve coordination, pre- and post-program studies will remain an appealing but limited option for assessing program performance.

*Quality of follow-up information* is emerging as a key evaluation, as well as performance standards-related concern. Researchers are unsure to what degree survey non-responders and inaccuracies in client self-reporting are biasing the follow-up results. State post-program studies using UI data are finding that UI post-program JTPA client data do not match well with follow-up data on the same clients. These findings are raising additional questions about the adequacy of the required post-program follow-up as a research tool.

## CONCLUSION

This review of key state and local evaluation issues raises some recurrent themes regarding the JTPA evaluation challenge. On the one hand, the discussion suggests a growing sophistication of evaluation concerns. Both states and SDAs have moved beyond performance outcome concerns to a broader self-examination on a range of issues related to the overall quality of JTPA. On the other hand, while practitioners are able to articulate more sophisticated information needs, they often lack the technical expertise to tackle their concerns in a useful way. As a result, evaluation results are over-interpreted, leading to faulty conclusions and policy decisions. The tendency to misread data is especially pronounced in effectiveness studies of programs, services and contractors.

Another theme cross-cutting the various evaluation issues is the supreme importance of data collection systems as a support for pragmatic evaluation of JTPA. Those organizations that have conceived the MIS and follow-up to serve a range of information needs beyond required performance reporting have an enormous research advantage. They have put this advantage to work not only in studying a rich variety of program outcomes, but also in refining an understanding of coordination, training and other service delivery processes linked to overall program quality.

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[1] This categorization of evaluation issues is based primarily on survey responses of evaluation workshop attenders, workshop discussions of issues, journal articles in *Evaluation Forum*, and personal interviews.

[2] The NCEP's participation study (Rupp and Sandell), for example, suggests that weak labor force attachment of long-term welfare recipients is a key factor in defining those most in need of services.

[3] For an in-depth discussion of the comparative strenths and weaknesses of experimental and non-experimental research approaches, see Blalock (1986).

[4] From author's conversations with practitioners, observations at workshops and review of program reports.

[5] For example, an NCEP-sponsored study of the use of UI data in post-program analysis of JTPA participants in 11 states has generated much interest among state level practitioners around the country. Several more states are slated to join the second phase of the study in 1990. The draft report on this research is listed in the references section as a forthcoming publication.

SECTION V

# Recommendations

The clear message from JTPA professionals is that lack of sufficient funding for JTPA administration and program services severely constrains evaluation options at the state and SDA level. Most JTPA organizations have inadequate staff and technical resources to plan for and carry out useful program evaluation. Administrators are under various pressures to funnel resources into essential administrative activities or program services. There are few incentives built into the overall system to invest in evaluation as an ongoing strategy for improving JTPA programs.

Given the looming figure of the federal budget deficit, Congress is unlikely to dramatically expand support for JTPA. However, even in the absence of congressional action, JTPA decision-makers at all levels can still do much to better define and respond to the JTPA evaluation challenge.

## Federal Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Labor can play a much stronger, proactive role in promoting state and local evaluation without compromising the program authority and autonomy proscribed for these levels of government in the Act. Specifically, the DOL could consider the following concrete suggestions for boosting the status of evaluation within the JTPA system and providing specific incentives to evaluate.

**1. Earmark federal discretionary funds specifically for state and local evaluation projects.** Many states and SDAs have the basic organizational interest in and commitment to improving programs through evaluation, but lack key resources for more fully developing their evaluation capabilities. Discretionary funds for evaluation could be targeted both broadly and narrowly. State JTPA agencies, Councils, SDAs and PICs could apply for funds to support a range of evaluation activities customized to meet their individual needs. In addition, discretionary money could fund a narrower range of demonstration projects recommended by state and local advisors, independent researchers and others familiar with JTPA evaluation issues. The latter would help to generate information on key program issues and test specific evaluation models with potentially broad applicability.

**2. Require that DOL-funded JTPA pilot, demonstration or other projects carried out by states or SDAs have a well-defined evaluation component.** Such a requirement would send a consistent message about the importance of integrating evaluation into the program planning process. Project funding should acknowledge the frequent need for contracting outside research expertise.

**3. Build a technical assistance agenda for improving state and local evaluation capabilities.** Federal leadership in the technical assistance arena is essential to encouraging broad support for evaluation. Currently only a small number of states and SDAs have the technical and organizational sophistication to support evaluation activities that move beyond very basic descriptive analyses of MIS and client follow-up data. The vast majority of JTPA organizations have little or no evaluation capability and are unlikely to develop such a capability any time soon on their own. As DOL rebuilds its TA function, it can work with states and SDAs to develop a *long-range agenda* for evaluation capacity-building at both levels.

Without state and local input, a federal TA initiative risks wasting scarce resources on activities whose timing, sequencing, or content do not mesh with individual recipients' needs. The opposite TA approach of deferring all evaluation capacity-building to individual states also poses efficiency risks. Given the widespread lack of interest in or understanding of evaluation, and the lack of technical expertise, a number states and SDAs would have difficulty productively using TA monies for evaluation.

If DOL were able to redevelop a cadre of evaluation research experts oriented to the pragmatic information needs of practitioners, it could initiate a number of important technical assistance activities that directly benefit a range of state and local participants. Such activities might include:

- Sponsoring non-technical workshops for council members, administrators and other decision-makers to educate JTPA leadership on the role of evaluation in improving programs.
- Offering evaluation training workshops for technical staff geared to different levels of technical expertise.
- Sponsoring different forums for exploring state and local evaluation issues, goals and needs.
- Providing technical consultation and advice to individual state and local evaluation projects.
- Supporting a clearinghouse to track and disseminate information on national, state, and local evaluations of job training programs.
- Developing special software packages for state and local data analysis.

**4. Expand the role of regional DOL offices in support of evaluation.** Regional offices, being more familiar and accessible to practitioners than the federal DOL, are a natural vehicle for carrying out national policies in support of JTPA program evaluation in a manner suited to meet the needs of regional constituents. Ideally, regional offices could have a small team of technical experts including statisticians, evaluation design and MIS computer specialists, to support capacity-building activities and to act as trouble shooters for individual evaluation projects in need of customized assistance.

5. Reinstitute focused staff development training. Prior to JTPA the DOL supported a broad system of staff development training. States have largely been unable to fill the training void created when this system was dismantled. Some sort of staff development mechanism needs to be reintroduced into the system if states and SDAs are to successfully shoulder greater evaluation responsibilities.

6. Promote more uniform definitions in reporting client data. Definitional inconsistencies across SDAs and states must be addressed at the national level with state and local input. Standardized program definitions and data measurement is a pre-requisite to useful interpretation and comparison of information across programs.

7. Give greater public recognition to state and local evaluation initiatives. Organizations which choose to evaluate, despite the many barriers and risks involved, need to receive some special recognition for their efforts. This recognition is important since the JTPA system currently offers little reward for evaluating. One way to give recognition is simply to collect and widely publicize information on evaluation activities on a regular basis. The federal government could also sponsor special competitions and awards to honor quality evaluation work.

## State Initiatives

Stronger institutional support for JTPA evaluation needs to develop in key state institutions, besides the JTPA administrative agency. State job training coordinating councils, governor's offices, legislatures, training and education agencies and the private sector can all contribute to elevating the status of evaluation as a policy and management tool within JTPA. Specifically, these institutions should work to:

1. Develop stronger leadership support for evaluation. Within the state JTPA system, evaluation does not enjoy nearly the level of institutional support as performance standards monitoring. Decision-makers often lack a basic conceptual understanding of evaluation as a management tool distinct from and complementary to monitoring. As a result, the development of evaluation-related resources is not treated as a priority. Even where staff expertise and quality data systems exist, these supports are not always sufficiently recognized and exploited. Education of state JTPA leadership is a requisite first step towards enlisting effective and coordinated organizational support for evaluation.

2. Develop clearer policy statements and plans defining the role of evaluation within the JTPA system. Very few state JTPA systems appear to operate with well-articulated evaluation policy or a planning guidelines. Individual evaluation efforts are frequently not integrated into ongoing planning and policy-making. In order to most efficiently utilize scarce administrative resources, those charged with developing evaluation capabilities need an evaluation policy foundation in place to legitimize and direct their planning efforts.

3. Strengthen the evaluation policy-making and policy review role of state councils. State councils have exerted surprisingly little influence on evaluation policy-making and could play a beneficial leadership role in this arena. As policy-makers, council members, in general, need to be *better educated* as to the fundamental contribution pragmatic evaluation can make to policy and program development. Council structure must include an active evaluation committee charged with *specific policy-making or policy-review tasks* and *that regularly reports its findings and recommendations* to the governor. To fulfill this mission, most state council committees would benefit from access to *independent technical advisors*.

4. Develop stronger interagency coordination in support of evaluation research activities. Due to a variety of technical and organizational barriers, data from UI, welfare, ES and other administrative systems are often inaccessible to JTPA evaluators. Where data access is at issue, a task force empowered by an overarching authority needs to identify the specific barriers to information sharing and recommend incentives for overcoming these barriers. State agencies connected with job training often have overlapping research interests, but no real mechanism for sharing and coordinating evaluation agendas. An *interagency research coordinating group* can strengthen coordination, promoting more efficient use of evaluation resources, while furthering professional development within cooperating agencies.

5. Foster vertical coordination and cooperation around evaluation activities. Too frequently, states and SDAs are unaware of each others' evaluation interests, activities and accomplishments. States need to place greater emphasis on two-way information sharing and coordination with SDAs around evaluation. Specifically, states and SDAs need to coordinate more actively around the *design and use of information systems* to ensure that they support the information needs of both levels to the maximum degree possible.

6. Implement state technical assistance activities that support and promote SDA evaluation. In designing technical assistance, most states have not been proactive in fostering evaluation at the SDA level. Given that so many SDAs lack an appreciation of evaluation options and lack the expertise to implement those options, capacity-building in this area should be an important component of state technical assistance. State sponsored efforts that local practitioners have frequently suggested include helping SDAs to obtain and use state administrative data, initiating information sharing activities and user groups, and funding demonstration activities.

7. Review and restructure set-aside and other funding policies to better support evaluation. Budgeting and funding decisions frequently exclude evaluation as a program priority. If states want to seriously respond to their legislated mandate to evaluate, stable sources of evaluation funding, even if very limited, need to be earmarked. Special programs funded out of state set-asides and EDWAA could be required to have an evaluation component. Six percent set-aside policies, in particular, need to strike a better balance between funding of direct services vs. funding of program development activities like evaluation.

8. Actively seek evaluation resources and support outside JTPA. Even if states commit greater proportions of set-asides and administrative funds to evaluation, these resources are still going to be extremely limited. State JTPA decision-makers need to seek new evaluation partners and contributors outside the program, including the federal government, state government, state coordinating agencies and private employers and foundations.

## Local Initiatives

In certain respects, SDAs face the toughest evaluation challenge. The majority of local administrative entities are non-urban, small-scale operations with scant financial, technical, and organizational resources. Local planners and policy-makers have limited experience with evaluation as a program management tool. They are locked into an accountability system in which program performance must take clear priority. While administrators are exhorted to examine and improve program quality and effectiveness, the system provides virtually no resources or incentives to encourage this kind of introspection. Until greater support and emphasis are given to evaluation at the state and federal levels, evaluation options for the great majority of SDAs will remain limited.

In spite of the limits imposed by the broader JTPA context, local JTPA organizations can set organizationally appropriate goals related to evaluation initiatives. Specifically, local JTPA administrators and policy-makers can:

1. Educate PIC members and other key decision-makers in order to obtain greater support for evaluation. Local JTPA decision-makers frequently make program judgments and decisions on the basis of performance information alone and are unaware of the limitations of this information. Greater PIC involvement in evaluation issues would strengthen the role of evaluation as a pragmatic tool for improving decision-making. An established *PIC evaluation subcommittee* that works closely with program staff is an essential institutional support for evaluation.

2. Integrate evaluation policies and goals into ongoing program planning. Evaluation is often instigated in response to a specific program issue, organizational problem or policy controversy. For a more effective and efficient use of resources, evaluation needs to part of ongoing planning and decision-making, to ensure that policy and planning priorities, program operations and evaluation goals are all well-articulated with each other.

3. Distinguish, to the degree possible, monitoring from evaluation activities. Often these activities are comingled under the monitoring unit, potentially biasing the evaluation results.

4. Explore potential evaluation contributors and resources within the local community. Most SDAs have neither the internal resources nor the technical expertise to evaluate. Some have expanded their evaluation opportunities through successful collaboration not only with other public agencies, but also with local government, higher education, philanthropic, and business institutions. In the absence of adequate JTPA funds for evaluation, this collaborative model is the main SDA option for developing greater independent evaluation capabilities.

5. Work with the state JTPA agency and other SDAs to create a statewide or regional evaluation information network. SDAs presently work on evaluation issues in relative isolation. SDA technical and planning staff who might be responsible for evaluation have limited opportunities for professional development in this field. Participation in an information network or work group is a fairly low-level resource investment that could help broaden evaluation perspectives and possibilities at the local level.

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# APPENDIX A: The JTPA Evaluation Design Project

The central purpose of the JTPA Evaluation Design Project has been to stimulate interest in JTPA evaluation and to assist states and SDAs in formulating pragmatic evaluation responses to JTPA. Perceiving the need of states and SDAs for a more sophisticated evaluation capability, the National Commission for Employment Policy (NCEP), and the IBM Corporation funded the first phase of the project in 1985. The Washington Employment Security Department (WESD) designed and coordinated project activities.

## The Evaluation Guides

The initial task of the project was to develop some specialized evaluation tools geared to the needs of JTPA practitioners at both the state and local level. During this first phase, the project team produced an eight volume set of evaluation guides covering a range of evaluation approaches and issues. A special feature in the design of the guides was the use of a broad range of project advisors. A National Advisory Committee, composed of national, state and local JTPA practitioners interested in evaluation, was selected to review and comment on the work in progress. In addition, JTPA planners, administrators and MIS specialists within Washington JTPA agencies participated in the project, contributing information to those developing the guides.

The key challenge for the project team was to design several alternative, yet complementary evaluation tools that could be flexibly applied in a variety of settings. In addressing this challenge, the authors focused on three distinct evaluation approaches: net impact, gross impact and process. Taken together, these complementary approaches support comprehensive evaluation over the JTPA planning cycle.

The set of guides, entitled ***JTPA Evaluation at the State and Local Level,*** includes the following volumes:

| | |
|---|---|
| Volume I | Overview |
| Volume II | A General Planning Guide |
| Volume III | A Guide For Process Evaluations |
| Volume IV | A Guide For Gross Impact Evaluations |
| Volume V | A Guide For Net Impact Evaluations |
| Volume VI | An Implementation Manual For Net Impact Evaluations |
| Volume VII | Issues Related To Net Impact Evaluations |
| | A. Evaluating Costs And Benefits |
| | B. The Debate Over Experimental Vs. Quasi-Experimental Approaches |
| Volume VIII | MIS Issues in Evaluating JTPA |

These volumes were distributed free to all state and local JTPA directors. Extra copies were made available to individual requesters at cost. Subsequently, the content of the guides formed the basis of the workshop curriculum developed during the next phase of the project.

In 1989, the Design Project team produced an updated and revised version of the above materials, which are condensed and integrated into a single volume edited by Ann Blalock and to be published later this year by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

## The Workshops

In the fall of 1986 the DOL's regional Employment and Training Administration office in Boston (Region I) invited the Design Project to present an evaluation workshop for JTPA practitioners in New England. In conjunction with DOL staff, the project team developed and presented an intensive 2-day workshop centered around the three major evaluation approaches outlined in the guides.

In 1987 the U.S. DOL's Office of Strategic Planning agreed to fund five additional JTPA evaluation workshops. To maximize scarce resources, the workshops were sponsored in conjunction with DOL regional ETA offices, using a partnership approach similar to that tested in the New England region. Primary regional sponsors for the workshop were selected according to their interest level and ability to commit to a sponsorship role a number of months in advance of the planned workshop dates. Sponsors included the regional ETA offices in Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, and Seattle. Kansas City and Philadelphia regional offices were co-sponsors with Denver and Atlanta, respectively. The regional sponsors acted as important links between project team members and practitioners, helping to provide practical information and contacts to workshop planners. This collaboration helped the project team to tailor the workshops to evaluation interests, priorities and activities in each region.

The workshops were geared primarily to JTPA planners and technical staff, but were open to interested administrators, policy-makers and council members at both the state and local levels. The core curriculum focused on the three complementary evaluation approaches developed in the project's evaluation guides. This technical material was supplemented by sessions on general evaluation concepts, evaluation planning issues, and organizational implications for the specific evaluation plans and activities of participants.

## Practitioner Journal

While the workshop series was completed in 1988, the Project has continued to produce *Evaluation Forum.* This journal has focused on state and local JTPA program evaluation issues and activities, with an emphasis on practitioner-authored and review articles. The primary purpose of the journal has been to serve as a national forum for sharing information about JTPA evaluation issues and

strategies. Although some articles provide technical information, the publication's general orientation is to serve the needs of state and local practitioners, rather than those of an academic or research audience. Published issues include:

| | |
|---|---|
| Issue One | Searching For Information To Improve Programs |
| Issue Two | Evaluation Issues/Evaluation Strategies |
| Issue Three | The Organizational Politics Of Evaluation |
| Issue Four | Employment And Training In The '90s: Youth At Risk |
| Issue Five/Six | Poverty And The Underclass (forthcoming) |

*Evaluation Forum's* first four issues were funded by the U.S. DOL, Employment and Training Administration's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, IBM and WESD. These issues were distributed to all state and local council chairs and directors by the National Governor's Association (NGA), the National Association of Counties (NACO), and the National Alliance of Business (NAB). The Design Project also has maintained a journal mailing list largely composed of individuals who have requested the journal. Circulation to individual requesters and non-JTPA institutions has grown to around 1,000.

As of 1989 a consortium of public and private organizations has supported the continued publication of the journal. Funders include USDOL's Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, NCEP, and The Ford Foundation. Contributors include the National Job Training Partnership, Inc. (NJTP), NGA, NACO, NAB, and the WESD. While the journal continues to be edited by Ann Blalock of WESD, *Evaluation Forum* will be published by the Center for Governmental Affairs at Northern Illinois University. The focus of the journal has been expanded to encompass the evaluation of employment and training, education, vocational education, welfare, and economic development programs.

# APPENDIX B: Sources Of Information

In writing this report I used unpublished materials and other sources of information available to me in my capacity as technical assistance coordinator for the JTPA Evaluation Design Project. This appendix specifies the different project-related sources that significantly contributed to ideas expressed in this report.

## Surveys And Interviews

***Feldman Interviews of JTPA Practitioners, 1985.*** The author conducted 18 telephone and in-person interviews of JTPA practitioners as background information for evaluation guides being developed. Interviews of subcontractors and SDA staff focused on interviewees' perceptions of program issues, information needs and relations with other administrative levels. Interviews with JTPA staff from state and national organizations contained questions about evaluation issues, MIS capabilities, coordination efforts, and barriers to evaluating JTPA.

***Snedeker and O'Sullivan Survey of Practitioners, 1985.*** This non-random telephone survey of 24 PIC and SDA representatives (12 from Washington State and 12 from other regions) was conducted by Bonnie Snedeker, a consultant, and Brian O'Sullivan of the Seattle-King County PIC to develop specific information for the Design Project on evaluation issues and activities at the local level. A written report on survey methods and findings is included in the references section (Snedeker, 1986). The individual survey responses provide case examples suggesting the limited role evaluation played in the early years of JTPA.

***Blalock Survey of JTPA Professionals/Council Members, 1987.*** Ann Blalock, special consultant to the JTPA Evaluation Design Project surveyed by mail all state and local JTPA directors and council chairs about JTPA evaluation issues, plans, activities and concerns. Survey results are described in her report (Blalock, 1988) cited in the references section.

***Feldman Interviews of Panel of Experts, 1989.*** As a follow-up to the above sources, the author conducted lengthy telephone interviews with a panel of local, state and national experts on JTPA evaluation and performance standards issues. The panel included two federal, two state and two local JTPA administrators, four interviewees from national public interest groups representing state and local JTPA constituents, and four JTPA researchers. The major focus of the interviews was on current key evaluation interests at the state and local level, coordination issues related to evaluation, and major supports and constraints to evaluation.

## Early Project Files

***National Advisory Committee Meetings, 1984-1985.*** The JTPA Evaluation Design Project team developed a series of evaluation guides in consultation with a National Advisory Committee composed of national, state and local JTPA practitioners and council members involved with evaluation. Each of the three meetings of the project team and the Committee was tape recorded and later summarized in written reports. These materials have been valuable in providing a sense of early evaluation issues, perspectives and concerns.

***Project Team Meeting Notes and Correspondence, 1984-85.*** These files further interpret state and local evaluation interests and capabilities, on the basis of information obtained from Advisory Committee members and other informants.

*State/SDA Evaluation Materials, Annual Reports, 1984-89.* The Design Project has collected numerous state and local reports containing information on evaluation activities and issues.

## Workshop-Related Sources

*Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire.* Prior to each of five regional JTPA evaluation workshops given by the Design Project in 1987-88, the Project mailed a brief questionaire to prospective workshop participants. The questionaire focused principally on the evaluation interests and training needs of state and local JTPA organizations. Its purpose was two-fold: to stimulate workshop attenders to think about the evaluation issues of greatest interest to them and to sensitize workshop presenters to attenders' concerns.

*Workshop Small Group Discussion on Issues.* In each of the six regional evaluation workshops given by the Design Project, workshop participants discussed in small groups and then shared with the group as a whole their specific evaluation agendas, including the issues of greatest importance to them and the organizational factors affecting their agendas. In five of the workshops, the issue areas discussed were immediately summarized in writing by Project team members.

*Workshop Planning Issues Session.* In each of the workshops, the author participated in a discussion session on the practical evaluation planning issues JTPA agencies face. These sessions contributed significantly to the author's ideas about supports and constraints to local and state JTPA evaluation.

*Personal Conversations Related to Workshop Planning.* Prior to each regional evaluation workshop, the author had frequent in-person and telephone contact with federal, state and local program administrators regarding workshop structure and content. These contacts afforded an opportunity to learn more about how each administrative level related to evaluation issues and how the different levels interacted around technical assistance activities. The author also debriefed with each of the other team members after each workshop to learn about issues or concerns raised in the other training sessions.

*Written Evaluations of Workshops.* Workshop participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the workshop in order to provide feedback to the workshop team. The responses of attenders suggested their technical knowledge and skill levels, their perceptions of evaluation's role in JTPA and the ways in which the workshop sessions did or did not meet their needs.

## Journal-Related Sources

*Articles/Materials Contributed to Evaluation Forum, 1987-89.* As a practitioner-oriented publication, *Evaluation Forum* has regularly solicited and obtained articles from JTPA practitioners. Articles have covered a range of evaluation-related topics and have provided a major means for tracking evaluation issues important to those in the field.

*Telephone Conversations and Interviews, 1987-88.* The author has contacted numerous JTPA researchers and practitioners to develop articles for the journal. These contacts have provided insights into the barriers to evaluation, as well as information on special evaluation interests and activities.

# APPENDIX C: Directory Of State And SDA Evaluation Activities

In August 1989 the JTPA Evaluation Design Project sent a brief survey of evaluation activities to all state JTPA agencies and SDA administrative entities. The survey asked organizations to provide information on up to three JTPA evaluation activities, either recently completed or in process. The following directory summarizes the information provided by 89 survey responders. This is by no means a comprehensive listing of state and local JTPA evaluation-related activities because some undetermined number of organizations involved in JTPA evaluation did not respond to the survey. Nonetheless, the information provided does give a general picture of the sorts of evaluation activities of current interest to JTPA organizations.

State and local evaluation activities are categorized by general evaluation issue areas, rather than by the specific methodology used. This organizational scheme permits the reader to see how a basic program issue is attacked in a variety of ways, using different data sources and evaluation approaches. Blank spaces in the different columns indicate that a particular category of information was not provided by the responder.

In some instances categorization of an individual evaluation activity may be somewhat arbitrary, either because the activity appeared to focus on more than one issue area or because the survey response provided insufficient information for making an unequivocal category assignment. In addition, the basic categories overlap to a certain degree because of the inherent difficulty of isolating interrelated evaluation issues and distinguishing those issues from the evaluation strategies commonly used to study them. The categorization scheme used includes the following general evaluation issue areas:

*1. Training and Job Quality.* Includes surveys of client and employer satisfaction, site and document reviews, interviews of contractors, and quantitative analysis of MIS and follow-up data.

*2. Administrative Structure and Policies/Specific Service Delivery Practices and Policies.* Includes

analyses of administrative structures and policies, coordination studies, examination of components of service delivery systems (such as intake, enrollment, assessment, assignment and placement procedures), and quantitative analysis of client flow through the system.

*3. Targeting and Service Equity.* Includes studies that examine who is served and how well or equitably different groups are served. Frequently a central concern of the evaluation is to develop specific information that will strengthen targeting policies or practices.

*4. General Follow-up and/or MIS Analyses.* Includes broad, descriptive data analyses, using one or both of these data systems. MIS or Follow-up analyses that seem to focus more narrowly on a given evaluation issue appear under one of the other issue categories.

*5. Youth Program Studies.* Includes studies of various youth programs, both summer and year-round, and studies of competency systems.

*6. Program Effectiveness.* Net Impact, Comparative and Cost- Effectiveness: Includes quantitative studies using a control or comparison group of non-participants against which the performance of JTPA participants may be measured (net impact); quantitative studies of the comparative effectiveness of different service strategies; and cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analyses.

*7. Studies of New, Model or Innovative Programs.* Includes studies that describe and analyze training projects that are testing or demonstrating a new program approach, usually for specified target groups. Often the evaluations combine both process and outcome approaches.

*8. Miscellaneous Evaluation-Related Activities.* Includes both monitoring and evaluation-related activities that do not appear to fall under any of the above issue categories. Activities that appear to be more related to performance standards outcomes or other compliance issues are also included.

## Key To Categories Of Information

### Information Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| FU | Follow-up data |
| UI | Unemployment Insurance data |
| Wel | Welfare data |
| LMI | Labor Market Information |
| ES | Employment Service data |
| Docs | Program documents |
| Quest | Special surveys, interviews or questionnaires |
| Onsite | Field observation |

### Funding Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| Admin | JTPA administrative funds |
| 6% | 6% set-aside |
| Set | Other set-aside funds |
| Agency | Funds from other public agencies |
| Appr | Special appropriations |
| Priv | Private sector |
| Tax$ | Tax dollars |

### Staffing Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| JTPA | JTPA planning, evaluation or other staff (besides monitors) |
| Monit | JTPA monitors |
| Rsrch | Agency staff from separate evaluation or research unit |
| Intern | Student intern |
| Priv | Private consultant or research firm |
| Agency | Staff contributed from other agencies or units |
| Acad | Academic researcher |

# Directory Of State And Local JTPA Evaluation Projects

## ISSUE AREA: Training And Employment Quality

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opportunities, Inc. (Watonga, OK) | Contractor Training Activities | MIS, Docs | Admin | JTPA | Quality of training was correlated to required performance standards outcomes. |
| Wayne Cnty PIC (Livonia, MI) | Program Design Study | MIS, LMI | Admin | JTPA | Federal policy on perf.-based contracting led to assessment as to which programs were to be delivered in-house vs. contracted out. Programs were evaluated against criteria for core training. Resulted in new training activities delivered in-house. |
| Kankakee Valley Job Training Program (Valparaiso, IN) | Voc Ed and OJT | MIS, LMI | Admin | JTPA | Evaluation of voc ed training and OJT - effectiveness in obtaining employment, relation of placements to labor market needs, cost-benefit analysis, sic/soc code analysis. Results used to determine most effective skills training strategies. |
| S.W. GA Regional Development Center (Camilla, GA) | Evaluation of Training/Placement Quality | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit, PIC | MIS data on participant wage levels, type of employment, training-related placement and retention reviewed on monthly or quarterly basis. Purpose is to insure quality training and placements. Also informs refunding and program design decisions. |
| S.W. GA Regional Development Center (Camilla, GA) | Post-Program Client Survey | Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Planned evaluation form will be distributed to terminated participants. Information from questionaire will be used to measure program effectiveness not only in terms of training quality, but also support services and placement quality. Results to be used in program design and targeting of services. |
| FL Division of Labor, Employment Security | Quality of II-A Training | MIS, FU, Quest | Agency | Acad | Study done by Florida State University on quality of II-A training. Intent was to take closer look at training services to determine whether quality meets intent of legislation. |
| Training Resource Center (Portland, ME) | Monitoring Training Quality | Quest | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit | Classroom Training, OJT and Work Experience participants surveyed on effectiveness of training in terms of curriculum, instructional quality, counseling and other services. Counselors, instructors and supervisors are also interviewed. |
| Training Resource Center (Portland, ME) | PIC Evaluation of CT | MIS, FU | Admin, 6% | JTPA | Periodically classroom training by analyzing MIS outcomes. PIC subcommittee review of outcomes from previous classes and quarterly follow-up reports. PIC also does annual review. |
| Jeffco E&T Services (Lakewood,CO) | Quality of Placement | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Developed 5-point scale for rating job quality and correlated quality ratings with follow-up variables. |
| W.E. Upjohn Institute (Kalamazoo, MI) | Long-term Effectiveness of Pre-Emp. Program | MIS, FU | Admin | Monit | To determine retention and wage rates from employment secured thru 3-week pre-employment program. Results used to direct job search training and placement activities. |
| GA Department of Labor | Analyses of Earnings Relative to Poverty Level | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | By taking family size into consideration, we are able to look at participants' post program earnings relative to the poverty level and evaluate our success at helping participants meet their economic needs. |
| GA Department of Labor | Job Quality Analysis | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | We use follow-up data to examine participants' jobs in terms of benefits and perceived stability, as well as earnings. A committee of the Governor's Employment and Training Council has asked us to develop a performance standard on job quality. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V.L.F.-PIC (Daytona Beach, FL) | Employment Quality | MIS, FU, LMI, Wel | Admin, Set | JTPA, Monit | To insure placements are quality and long term. |
| WSOS Commun. Action Commis. (Fremont, OH) | Employer Eval. of JTPA Services | Quest | Admin | JTPA, Priv | Surveyed 200 employers about their satisfaction with program and suggestions for improving services. PIC used results to plan mix of program services for the next year. |
| N.C. Dept. of Economic & Community Development/E&T Div. | Analysis of Participant Income and Poverty Level | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Analysis related income at termination and/or follow-up to participants' family size to determine whether income raised participant and family above poverty level. Poverty index also compared to other outcome measures of success. SDAs were surprised by results. |
| Marin Cnty Office of E&T (San Rafael, CA) | Training Quality | Quest | Admin | JTPA, Priv | 75% of II-A completers are surveyed to determine their perceived needs on entry and their satisfactions after completing program. |
| Heartland PIC (Lakeland, Fl) | Success/Failure Profiles | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Determine what participant characteristics are highly associated with successful outcomes for each training activity. Information utilized for training referrals and for designing/selecting programs for specified target groups. |
| Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency (Algood, TN) | Classroom Training Quality | MIS, FU, LMI, ES, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Purpose is to define the JTPA population that will benefit most from CT and to determine those training facilities offering the most productive training services. |
| Columbus Job Training Division (Columbus, GA) | Education and Job Quality | MIS, FU | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit | To discover if participants' educational level before training has a bearing on the quality of placement attained. Are certain kinds of training better suited to individuals with a particular educational level? |
| SDA I, Trenton, MO | Program Outcomes for Females | MIS, Docs | Admin | JTPA | Studied entered employment, wage, completion and retention rates of females in OJT and classroom training. Resulted in change of design in classroom training programs. |
| Columbus Job Training Division (Columbus, GA) | Job Quality | MIS, FU, LMI, | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit | To determine if training and resulting placement allowed individuals to move out of poverty. If training doesn't lead to economic advancement beyond poverty, then a re-examination of program design and training content is necessary. |
| DuPage PIC (Wheaton, IL) | Client Characteristics/Outcomes Analysis | MIS, FU, Docs, ES, Quest, Other | Admin | Monit | Will analyze training outcomes according to various client characteristics to see if particular characteristics are more associated with success than others. Information will be used to improve training programs and support services. |
| TX Dept. of Commerce | What Did JTPA Participants Think About JTPA? | FU | Admin | JTPA | Study used 13-week follow-up survey results of 30,082 JTPA terminees. Report issued; results were used by the state and SDAs to provide better services to participants. |
| JTPA Ohio | Employer Survey | MIS, FU, Quest | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Priv | Purpose is to assess employer satisfaction with employees. They rate competence, behavior and training. Results will be used to improve training. Also used to validate participant follow-up data. |
| Interlocal Assoc. (Greenwood, IN) | Employer Satisfaction Study | MIS, FU, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | To determine employer satisfaction with JTPA services. |
| Interlocal Assoc. (Greenwood, IN) | Training Quality | MIS, Quest | | JTPA, Monit | To determine trainee satisfaction with training services. |
| Larimer Cnty E&T Services (Fort Collins, CO) | PIC Review of Program Quality | MIS, Quest | Admin | JTPA, PIC | The PIC annually reviews program effectiveness and quality of services. It surveys clients and employers about their experiences with the program. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luzerne County Human Resources (Wilkes-Barre, PA) | JTPA/Welfare Analysis | MIS, Wel, ES | Admin, Appr | JTPA, Rsrch | Profiled welfare recipients profile to ascertain the degree and type of services required for the long-term welfare recipient to develop economic self-sufficiency. |
| Hampden County E&T Consortium (Springfield, MA) | Program Effectiveness | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | To evaluate the effectiveness of service providers (vendors) in order to improve service mix to clients. |
| City of Pittsburgh SDA | OJT Activities | Quest | Tax $ | Intern | Study involved interviewing employees who had used OJT. Also, a questionaire and sample telephone follow-up interview of contractors was used to determine satisfaction with OJT system. Satisfaction was higher when contractor had specific skills in mind for employee. Suggests employers need to be as specific as possible in requests for OJT employees. |
| Portland PIC (Portland, OR) | Job Placement Study | MIS, FU, UI | Admin | JTPA | N/A |
| IN Dept. of E&T Services | Customer Satisfaction Surveys | ES, Quest | Set | JTPA | Our customer satisfaction surveys of job seekers and employers demonstrated overall satisfaction with ES efforts and indicated areas (both programmatic and geographic) of strength and weakness. |

## ISSUE AREA: Administrative Structure And Policies/Service Delivery Practices

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S.E. ID PIC (Pocatello, ID) | Coordination Study | Quest | Admin | JTPA | We are particularly interested in improving coordination with JTPA service providers and Health and Welfare to enhance JOBs and prevent duplication of services. |
| Wayne Cnty PIC (Livonia, MI) | Coordination of Human Services | MIS, Wel, ES | Admin, agency | JTPA, Rsrch, Agency | State in the process of developing coordinated human services system. SDA's working with other agencies to develop coordinated assessment and referral. |
| Heart of TX Council of Gov. (Waco, TX) | Independent Review of SDA | MIS, Docs | Admin, Agency | Rsrch, Priv | Private consultant reviewed SDA's service delivery systems and made recommendations to prepare us for upcoming state evaluation. |
| SDA #7, Chicago, IL | Organizational Response Capability | Quest | 6% | JTPA, Priv | To insure organizational makeup that gives PIC and AE management and providers information and systems needed to serve eligibles more effectively. |
| Pentad, Inc. (Wenatchee, WA) | Review of Intake Diagnosis | MIS, Quest, Assess | Admin | JTPA, Acad | Process analysis of staff intake procedures and quantitative computer analysis relating assessment, assignment and outcomes. Goal was to systematically describe assessment practices, to make suggestions for improving and to understand how assessment practices might influence training assignment and outcomes. |
| N.C. Dept. of Economic & Community Development/Division of E&T | Services to Families | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Project being developed. Issue is whether resources can be better used if identification of family members permits JTPA and other state agencies to coordinate to provide more support to family. |
| Mid-Willamette Jobs Council (Salem, OR) | Analysis of Assess., Empl. Dev. Plan, and Sup. Serv. | Docs, Other | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Changing federal legislation and improving economy led to evaluation of assessment, employment development plan (EDP) procedures and support services policy. Resulted in improvements in these components of system. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| OR Consortium (Albany, OR) | Voc'Rehab Coordination Project | MIS, VocReh, | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Project allows sharing of information on mutual JTPA/VRD clients to encourage better case management at local level. Allows program operators to coordinate resources and services to compliment those offered by the other agency. |
| City of Oakland (Oakland, CA) | Intake Study | MIS, ES, Quest | DOL | Priv | To determine options for developing most "user friendly" intake system, based on PIC's desire to serve the most-in-need. |
| Cumberland Human Res. Agency (Algood, TN) | Service Delivery Policies | MIS, FU, LMI, UI, Wel, ES, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | To determine how limited funds can most effectively be allocated to training facilities providing quality programs serving those most in need. |
| City of Oakland (Oakland, CA) | Administrative Structures Study | Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | Designed to produce a more efficient and effective system of delivering administrative and program services within the SDA. |
| Western Missouri PIC (Sedalia, MO) | Interagency Coordination | FU, Wel, UI, ES, Quest | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit, Agency | Study to improve coordination with other agencies; to identify duplication; to improve referral systems; to improve marketing to clients. Possible results: common information systems and multi-county resource guide. |
| Western Missouri PIC (Sedalia, MO) | Study of Pre-enrollment Activities | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest, ES, LMI, UI, Wel | Admin, 6%, Agency | JTPA, Monit, Agency | To study and improve intake and assessment and marketing/recruiting systems. Goals are to make systems more uniform and efficient and to eliminate duplication of effort. |
| JTPA Ohio | Evaluation of Coordination | Docs | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Agency | To evaluate quality of local coordinated system building with ES, Human Services and education agencies. Information is used to make 6% incentive awards. |
| Workhawaii (Honolulu, HI) | Study of Service Delivery System | MIS, FU, Docs, Ques | Admin | JTPA, Acad, Intern | Consultants hired to examine current recruitment and intake practices and to recommend effective ways of marketing program and strategies to retain clients in program. |
| Santa Cruz County Human Res. Agency (Santa Cruz, CA) | Service Delivery Policies and Practices | MIS, FU, Docs, Other SDAs | Admin | JTPA, Monit | The procurement system in place after CETA was fragmented and becoming administratively burdensome to JTPA staff and subcontractors. Major purpose was to review how we plan for and procure participant services and to develop comprehensive policies and procedures for securing and delivering services. |
| Dekalb PIC (Decatur, GA) | Welfare Program Drop-out Study | MIS, FU, Wel, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Agency, State JTPA | Welfare recipients who drop out of training are less likely to be employed at follow-up than recipients who remain in the program. The PIC attempting to understand why certain recipients do not complete training. |
| Northern L. Winnebago PIC (Appleton, WI) | Study of PIC Committee Structure | Docs, Quest, Other | Admin, State $ | JTPA, Monit, Priv | Study reviewing structure of PIC committees to enhance coordination around evaluation and ability to respond to future issues. |
| Hampden County E&T Consortium (Springfield, MA) | Intake/Assessment Study | Docs, Quest | Admin, Set, Agency | JTPA, Priv | Evaluate intake/assessment processes in order to better define goals and objectives, instruments used to achieve goals and client flow through the system. |
| Susquehanna Region PIC (Havre de Grace, MD) | Study of Client Recruitment Issues | LMI, Wel, ES, Docs, Quest | Set | Priv | Study of how clients are recruited, enrolled and placed, with a focus on improving the system. Factors examined included marketing and outreach, intake, and mix of programs and services offered. A four-point marketing model was used to assess these factors. Recommendations included in a report distributed to staff, vendors, Job Service and Social Services. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| PIC, Rock Island, IL | Services to Employers | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest, Other | Admin | JTPA | To ensure services to employers are of highest quality and to ensure placement services, in particular, are provided to all clients, including target groups, according to objective criteria. Study resulted in changes in internal policies and staff structure and practices regarding placement services and OJT placement. |
| PIC, Rock Island, IL | Pre-enrollment Services | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest, Other | Admin | JTPA | The study will look at eligibility issues. Its major purpose will be to ascertain what kind of screening in or out of JTPA occurs due to present preenrollment practices. |

## ISSUE AREA: Targeting Hard-To-Serve/Equitable Service

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N.W. WA PIC (Bellingham, WA) | Analysis of "No-Shows" | Docs, Quest | Admin | Acad | An analysis of individuals who make initial application but fail to complete steps to enrollment. Goals were to determine whether no-shows are more often hard-to-serve individuals, and to assess whether application process discourages certain applicants. |
| VA Governor's E&T Dept. | Target Group Reports | MIS, FU, Wel, Quest | Admin | JTPA | Purpose of the Target Group Series was to focus on the special needs and service requirements of particular population groups. Services and outcomes were analyzed; policy recommendations made to Council and executive management. |
| W.E. Upjohn Institute | Female Participant Outcome Study | MIS, FU | Admin | Monit | To determine if a variation existed between male and female placement rates and outcomes. Placement data by sex, wage, DOT codes and activity were reviewed. |
| Jeffco E&T Services (Lakewood, CO) | Target Group Analysis | MIS, $ | Admin | JTPA | Analyzed number of clients served & dollars expended for various target groups, most important of which is welfare. |
| GA Dept. of Labor | Study on Competitive Disadvantages | MIS | Admin | JTPA | To find out what our own data could tell us about defining those "most in need." We identified key barriers to employment, were able to characterize target groups in terms of these barriers and found high levels of service to these groups. Information helpful in setting service priorities. |
| V.L.F. PIC., Inc. (Daytona Beach, FL) | Targeting Hard-to-Serve | MIS, FU, LMI, Wel, Quest | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit | To insure services to those most in need. |
| Upper Cumberland Human Res. Agency (Algood, TN) | Targeting OJT Services | MIS, FU, LMI, UI, Docs | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Purpose is to determine the groups most in need of OJT and to determine the most effective means of delivering training. |
| TN Dept. of Labor | Services to Target Populations | MIS, FU, UI, Wel | Admin | JTPA | To determine the level of equitable service to traditional and "at risk" populations and the overall impact of such services. |
| Santa Cruz County Human Res. Agency (Santa Cruz, CA) | Study of Program Effectiveness | MIS, FU, | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Change in 1988 DOL management goals prompted evaluation of effectiveness of targeting of services to high-risk clients and program outcomes for subgroups of those clients. New program targeted to homeless youth and adults was implemented. |
| Hampden County E&T Consortium (Springfield, MA) | Targeting of Services | MIS | Admin | JTPA | To evaluate the mix of clients served in order to develop better recruiting and outreach methodologies. |
| Luzerne Cnty Human Resources (Wilkes-Barre, PA) | Participant Profiles Study | MIS, FU | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Priv | An in-depth analysis of client profiles and outcomes to develop upgraded data systems. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heartland PIC (Lakeland, FL) | Applicant/Enrollee Analysis | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Determine to what degree the characteristics of our applicants mirror those of enrollees. Determine reasons for significant variance and effect corrective action. |
| AR Employment Security Division | Target Group Performance Evaluation | MIS, Census | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Acad | Compares percent of target group participants served to percent of eligible population. Derived from MIS data and from Annual Planning Information Projections, U.S. Census. Further study should involve analysis of methods used to derive eligible population statistics. |
| S.E. TN PIC (Chattanooga, TN) | Program Improvement | Docs | Agency, Appr | Monit | To examine program effectiveness in serving econ. disadvantaged youth, welfare recipients, and foster care youth. |
| MI Dept. of Labor/Bureau of E&T | Hard-To-Serve Initiative | MIS, Docs, Quest | Admin, 6%, Agency | JTPA, Monit | N/A |
| Job Service ND | Service to Disabled | MIS, ES, VocReh | Admin | JTPA | To determine level of service to disabled and perception of support agencies as to level of service. |
| Job Service ND | Male Vs. Female Wage at Placement | MIS, FU, ES | Admin, Agency | JTPA | To compare wages at placement for males and females in comparable occupations. Information used to evaluate effectiveness of programs and training. |

## ISSUE AREA: Program Effectiveness: Net Impact, Comparative Or Cost Effectiveness

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baltimore Office of Employment Devel. | Program Impact Study | MIS, Docs, school | Set | JTPA | Impact evaluation of innovative program for at risk in-school students. Measures academic progress, attendance and drop-out rates, and other indicators of school success. Control and experimental groups used to determine program effectiveness. |
| Jeffco E&T Services (Lakewood, CO) | Cost Effectiveness Analysis | MIS, $ | Admin | JTPA | Analyzing expenditures by client types, program activities and outcomes to determine cost effectiveness. |
| Columbus Job Training Div. (Columbus, GA) | Comparison of Placements/Types of Training | MIS, FU, LMI | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit | Purpose was to determine the type of training that was more likely to result in placements in order to make programmatic decisions about whether to invest more in OJT vs. classroom and long-term vs. short-term training. |
| N.W. WA PIC (Bellingham, WA) | Comp. Analysis of Post-Program Success | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | Acad | Comparative analysis using participant characteristics, assessment data, termination and follow-up data to assess the impact of different program activities on participant outcomes. Other purposes include testing the predictive power of competency assessment and assessing whether competency-based approach balanced multiple barriers with multiple services. Resulted in revision of competency system and elimination of redundant assessment measures. |
| NW PA Trng Consortium (Franklin, PA) | Comparison of Service Strategies in Welfare Programs | MIS, FU, Wel, ES, Docs, Quest | | Agency | Since a welfare demonstration program is widening to 5 counties, agency will evaluate effectiveness of specific components, contractors, and service mix to fine-tune program. Likely emphasis will be on trainee characteristics, literacy levels, employment and retention. |
| City of Pittsburgh SDA | Contractor Evaluations | MIS, FU | Tax $ | Intern | The project looks at performance of individual classroom training contractors through a regression model using a variety of demographic and program variables. Project results not yet available. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IN Dept. of E&T Services | Net Impact Studies | MIS, UI, ES | Admin | JTPA | Our "return on investment" series of analyses was intended to measure the net impact of participation in JTPA Title II-A adult programs on earnings and reductions in welfare costs and dependency. Documented that JTPA participation has a material effect. |
| WA Employment Security Dept. | FIP (welfare reform program) Evaluation | MIS, UI, ES, Docs, Quest, Onsite | Agency, Appr | Rsrch, Agency, Priv | Purpose is to evaluate the Family Independence Program (FIP), the state's welfare reform program. A net impact study of outcomes, a cost-benefit analysis, and a process study of the program's administration will be conducted. Results will be used to inform the state legislature and federal decision-makers about the program's effectiveness. |
| Utah Office of Job Training | Dislocated Worker Net Impact Study | MIS, FU, UI | Admin | JTPA, Priv | Major purpose was to provide estimates of net impacts of statewide JTPA Title III programs. Also important for development of statistical models for estimating returns to other JTPA programs. Net impacts differ significantly according to type of training given. |
| Larimer County E&T Services | National JTPA Study Site | MIS, UI, FU, Docs, Quest | DOL | Priv | Part of the DOL's national net impact study to assess the effectiveness of JTPA programs in increasing the employment and earnings of participants and reducing welfare costs. |
| DeKalb PIC (Decatur, GA) | Comparison of Different Training Programs | MIS | Admin | JTPA | OJT and customized training appear to have higher placement and retention rates than classroom training. The PIC suspected differences in outcomes may be due to characteristics of clients in these respective programs. We devised a method for assigning factor values to the different client characteristics in order to more realistically compare projects and service providers. |
| MT Dept. of Labor & Industry | National JTPA Study | MIS, Docs | Agency | JTPA, Rsrch, Priv | State's SDA is participating in national study of JTPA. Experimental design in which one-third of eligibles are assigned to control group which receives no JTPA services. Their outcomes will be compared to those who did receive services. |
| Pentad, Inc. (Wenatchee, WA) | Comparative Analysis of Outcomes | MIS, Assess | Admin | JTPA, Acad | A comparative analysis of different program activities in order to estimate how successful each activity is, controlling for the influence of different participant characteristics on outcomes in each activity. |

## ISSUE AREA: Youth Program Studies

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S.E. ID PIC (Pocatello, ID) | Youth Competency Systems | Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | We are evaluating various competency systems being used in order to implement a "tested" competency program. |
| Opportunities, Inc. (Watonga,OK) | Basic and Remedial Ed | Docs, Quest, Score | II-A, B | JTPA | To measure increases in post-program reading and math scores. |
| Opportunities, Inc. (Watonga, OK) | Competency System Review | MIS, FU, Other | Admin | JTPA, PIC | Revising competency system to comply with federal requirements and to respond better to local labor market needs. |
| Dayton Job Training (Dayton, OH) | Youth Program Evaluation | Docs, Quest | 6% | Acad | N/A |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Training of Greater NE (Lincoln, NE) | II-B Remedial Education | MIS, Docs, Quest, Score | Admin | JTPA | To evaluate effectiveness of summer youth remedial ed component for II-B participants assessed as needing remedial ed. Pre-and post-test scores analyzed; student and teacher reactions gathered. Results will be used to assess program design. |
| Kankakee Valley Job Trng Prog. (Valparaiso, IN) | In-School Youth Programs | MIS, Docs | Admin | JTPA, Agency | Evaluation of services to in-school youth in terms of acquisition of basic ed and pre-employment/work-maturity competencies, relatedness of competencies to job opportunities and employment, retention in school, academic achievement/involvement in school activities. Results used to assess/revise service strategies. |
| Baltimore Office of Employment Devel. | | MIS, Doc, Quest | Admin | JTPA | To determine how completion rates in youth remediation programs could be raised. Included participant and staff surveys as well as review of participant files. Results used to strengthen program structure. |
| D.C. Dept. of Employment Services | Summer Youth Employment Program | MIS, Quest | Admin | Rsrch | To measure participant satisfaction and impacts of summer youth program on the career choices and personal development of youth served 1984-89. Results to be used in decision-making regarding proposed program changes. |
| W.E. Upjohn Institute | Training Quality of Youth Program | MIS, Docs, Quest | Admin | Monit | Analyzed number and nature of counseling contacts, competency system compliance, and general outcomes of the training of youth Work Education program. Results used to implement change in service delivery and staffing. |
| Business Services Corp. (Gulfport, MS) | Analysis of Targeted School Remediation Project | MIS, school | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Analysis of remediation and employability skills programs in seven school districts. Also examines coordination with voc ed program linked with job specific skills training and pilot program for day care. |
| Houston JTPC (Houston, TX) | Basic Skills Remediation | Quest, Scores | Agency | Priv | Evaluation of computer-assisted remediation program serving at-risk Hispanic youth to determine whether participants demonstrated significant growth in basic skills. Also served to test partnership model between SDA and school district. Model is being replicated in 6 new schools. |
| Western Missouri PIC (Sedalia, MO) | Improving Youth Competency | Docs, Quest | Set | JTPA, Priv | To review and revise Youth Competency System, including analysis of Job Specific System and Pre-employment/Work Maturity System. |
| Seattle-King County PIC (Seattle, WA) | Youth Program Review | MIS, FU, LMI, Docs | Admin | JTPA, Priv | Extensive review of youth programs to evaluate effectiveness in serving "hard-to-serve" youth. Results applied in demonstration program emphasizing participant sorting and service assignment according to skill deficiency. |
| NW PA Training Partnership Consortium (Franklin, PA) | Gains in Literacy After SYETP | MIS, Docs, Quest, Scores | SYETP | JTPA | To improve summer enrichment activities, youth attending activities are pre- and post-tested to measure functional grade levels in reading and mathematics. Skill gains are analyzed in relation to contractors' methods, youth's age and academic status, and other variables. Results given to contractors and school districts. |
| City of Oakland (Oakland, CA) | Study of SYETP Worksites | MIS, Docs | Admin | JTPA, Monit | To determine, in some cases by client group, what types of worksites provide the most valuable work-experience to SYETP participants. The results of the study will change the focus of the 1990 program. |
| WA Consortium (Vancouver, WA) | Planned Youth Program Services Review | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | Priv | Agency is planning a program evaluation of JTPA youth services. The focus will be on the quality of training, including basic skills training and the similarities and differences between in-school and out- of-school youth programs. The information will be used to plan youth programs that provide effective training for at-risk youth. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| Marin County Office of E&T (San Rafael, CA) | Improving Youth Comp. System | MIS | Admin | JTPA | To analyze gross impacts in Preemployment/work maturity youth competency system among program completers as part of system development and field testing process. |
| MI Dept. of Labor/Bureau of E&T | STEP Evaluation | MIS | Set, Agency, Priv | SDA, Priv | N/A |

## ISSUE AREA: Studies Of New, Model Or Innovative Programs

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Houston JTPC (Houston, TX) | Eval. of Computer-Assisted Instruction | Quest, Scores | | Acad | Evaluation of 4 CAI systems providing literacy and GED training. Compared participant outcomes for different systems and for different skill levels. Also examined program design and administration. Results have supported expansion of CAI basic skills training for the hard-to-serve. |
| NJ Dept, of Labor, Div. of E&T | Evaluation of Selected OCT Programs | MIS, FU. Docs, Quest | Admin | Monit | Purpose was to identify factors common to program success. 17 top occupational classroom training programs were chosen by SDAs for study. Results can be used in program selection and SDA operations. |
| WI Dept. Of Industry, Labor and Human Relations | Job Center Evaluation | Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | Study of 4 pilot projects involving coordination and consolidation of various employment and training services through a single Job Center. Model has proven effective in terms of improved services, enhanced coordination with voc ed institutions and cost savings through eliminating duplication of services. |
| Santa Cruz County Human Res. Agency (Santa Cruz, CA) | Pilot Project for Homeless | MIS, Quest | 6% | JTPA | Study of pilot project targeting services to homeless, high risk youth and long-term AFDC recipients. Study examined program design involving comprehensive training and supportive services. Resulted in reorganization of agency to combine comprehensive human services in one agency service unit. |
| SDA #11, St. Paul, MN | Evaluation of Work Experience Program | MIS, Docs, Quest, Other | Priv | Acad, Priv | The McKnight TRANSITIONS program is a three-year case managed work experience program funded by a private foundation. Conducted by a private consultant, the evaluation focused on both qualitative and quantitative information. |
| Seattle-King County PIC (Seattle, WA) | Review of 6% programs targeted to the hard-to-serve. | MIS, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA,Monit | Programs designed to test effectiveness of special strategies, such as case management and basic skills training in terms of employability and placement outcomes. Results demonstrated the need for more intensive interventions for the at-risk population. |
| SDA #11, St. Paul, MN | Study of New Welfare Program | MIS, Wel, Docs | Agency | JTPA | STRIDE is the state's welfare reform initiative, which is now evaluated by the county, as grantor. Evaluation focuses on outcomes and service quality. |
| Portland PIC (Portland, OR) | NEET Evaluation | MIS, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | N/A |
| MT Dept. of Labor & Industry | AFDC Model Projects | Wel, Docs, Quest, JTPA reports | SJTCC, Agency | JTPA, Acad, Agency | 4 AFDC model programs designed to increase self-sufficiency of recipients and their families. Test opportunities to coordinate and supplement JTPA, AFDC and other resources. State will use results in planning JOBS programs. |
| SDA #11, St. Paul, MN | Stewart McKinney Homeless Demo Project | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | DOL | JTPA, Priv | The evaluation focused on outcomes, but also involved gathering descriptive qualitative information on the project. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| Berrien-Cass-Van Buren PIC (Benton Harbor, MI) | Hard-To-Serve Initiative Model | MIS, FU, Wel, Docs | Admin | Agency | JTPA Model project designed to reach the hard-to-serve and provide integrated services through multiple agencies. Integrated system will be used in future JTPA activities to reduce duplication and further objectives. |
| Susquehanna Region PIC (Havre de Grace, MD) | Linking Training and Economic Dev. | LMI, Quest | DOL | Priv | Case study describing linkages between job training and economic development activities in two counties. |
| PA Dept. of Labor & Industry | Joint JOBS Initiative | MIS, FU, LMI, Wel, UI, ES, Quest, Other | 6%, Agency | Monit, Agency, Priv | JOBS Initiative (coordinated services program for welfare recipients) being evaluated to determine how it can be improved. Efforts will also focus on who is being served and how they are benefiting. |

## ISSUE AREA: General Follow-Up And/Or MIS Analyses

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S.E. ID PIC (Pocatello, ID) | Follow-Up Studies | FU | Admin | JTPA | To see how the SDA is doing compared to other SDAs and to improve employment and training efforts. |
| WA Employment Security Dept. | UI-JTPA Study | NCEP | MIS, FU, UI | Rsrch, Acad | NCEP-sponsored study which examines retention and earnings using UI records of participants. Also to compare the UI data set with JTPA data set. |
| MD Dept. of Ec. and Employ. Dev. | JTPA Follow-Up | FU | Admin | SDA contract | State offers SDAs a series of follow-up data which far exceeds federal requirements to enable them to do individual evaluations. |
| S.W. GA Reg. Dev. Center (Camilla, GA) | State Follow-Up | FU | Admin | Acad | Information on job retention, need for support services and other data collected at participant follow-up interview and used in determining program effectiveness. Although not conclusive, info can give indication of need to more intensely examine types of services SDA provides. |
| SDA #1, Port Orchard, WA | Long-Term Follow-Up | MIS, FU, Wel, UI, ES | Admin | JTPA, Monit | SDA considering study on job retention at 6 months after termination. Would give us better picture of how effective services are and pinpoint what services work best for which clients. |
| Workhawaii (Honolulu, HI) | Follow-Up Assessment | FU, Quest, Docs, Other | 6% | JTPA, Agency, Priv | Assessed improvement in employment status and earnings in PY 87-88. Target groups studied included welfare, immigrants, program dropouts, long-term unemployed. Outcomes examined in terms of training strategy, placement type, placement hourly wage and termination status. Based on results, program has continued to target services to "most-in-need." |
| VA Governor's E&T Dept. | Annual Evaluation Report | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Annual statewide evaluation first started in PY 1985, based on analysis of terminee data. Since PY 1986 analysis includes follow-up data. Considered part of state's major responsibility for program accountability, as well as for improving policy and program operations. Distributed to SDAs, State agencies, councils, legislative and exec. branches. |
| N.C. Dept. of Economic & Community Development/ Division of E&T | Outcomes by Activity and Demographic Variables | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Activity variable reflecting all services given to participant crosstabulated with demographic variables and outcomes. Activity variable has some face value in discussing interaction between individual characteristics, services given and outcomes. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| OR Consortium (Albany, OR) | Activity Matrix | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Monthly MIS analysis showing the number of people who go through each activity, amount of time they spend and average wage upon completion. Sent to program operators so they can self-evaluate program mix. Also used to monitor balance of services. |
| D.C. Dept. of Employment Services | JTPA Termin. and Post-Program Follow-up | MIS, FU | Admin | Rsrch | Analysis of JTPA vendor performance in areas of placement, terminations and job retention between April 1, 1988 and March 30, 1989. Analyzed termination data and 13-week follow-up results. |
| Heartland PIC (Lakeland, FL) | Wage Gain Analysis | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Determine pre/post JTPA program wage gains by training activities and participant characteristics. |
| Central Piedmont PIC, (Rocky Mount, VA) | MIS Study for IIA and IIB | MIS, Docs | Admin | JTPA | Identifies who was served, whether equitable service requirements were met, mix of activities used, performance standards attainments, expenditures and any causes related to low performance. |
| Du Page PIC (Wheaton, IL) | Program Effectiveness Analysis | MIS, FU, Docs, LMI, Quest | Admin | Monit | Periodic statistical analysis of outcomes by subcontractor will be sent to each subcontractor to see how results compare with mandated performance benchmarks. Results will be used to target areas for possible program change. |
| NJ Dept. of Labor, Division of E&T | Follow-up Study | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | To analyze follow-up outcomes in relation to differences in the types of training/services, and participant characteristics. |
| Houston JTPC, (Houston, TX) | Follow-up Analysis | MIS,FU | N/A | Acad | To survey participants on their views about the quality and effectiveness of JTPA and to determine longer-term impacts of program participation. Stratified sample used. |
| TX Dept. of Commerce | 52-Week Follow-up Study | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | Purpose of the study is to investigate the long-term effect of JTPA, using 52-week follow-up results. Focus of analysis and report will be on the decrease in welfare dependency. |
| WI Dept.of Industry, Labor and Human Relations | Eval. of Dislocated Worker Program | MIS, FU | 6% | JTPA | Study of Dislocated Worker's Program covers a four year period (PY 1984-87). It analyzed participant characteristics, placement and wage rates and occupational distribution of placements. Since there was some evidence of sexual stereo-typing, the state developed workshops and training sessions on providing improved services to women. |
| JTPA Ohio | 13 and 26-Week Follow-up | MIS, Quest | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Priv | Examines welfare reduction at 26 weeks; program outcomes by age, race and sex; and program interventions in relation to employment, earnings and welfare reduction. Also examines client satisfaction with training. |
| Northern L. Winnebago PIC (Appleton, WI) | Long-term Follow-up Study | Quest | Admin | Rsrch | Designing a written survey of participants to determine job retention and satisfaction with services 6-12 months after leaving program. |
| Luzerne County Human Resources (Wilkes-Barre, PA) | Follow-up Evaluation | FU | Admin, Set | JTPA | Study of relationship of JTPA services to long-term performance outcomes of participants. |
| MA Department of E&T | Examination of Training Activities | FU | Admin, Other | Rsrch | Examined who received training; what training activities were pursued; employment and earnings gain; and industrial and occupational change among training recipients. Based on 13 week post-program survey of adults who terminated between April 1987 and March 1988. Data weighted to reflect actual JTPA terminee population. |
| MA Department of E&T | Preliminary Summary of Program Activities | MIS | Admin, Other | Rsrch | Analyzed four years of MIS data for II-A. Profiled JTPA participants and examined JTPA services and SDA program activities during this time period. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| N.W. WA PIC (Bellingham, WA) | Analysis of Employment Retention | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | Acad | Analysis of non-retention of employment at 13 weeks to identify reasons why some participants fail to retain jobs, to assess our ability to predict non-retention on basis of participant characteristics and to assess whether limited post-program services could improve retention. |
| S.C. Office of Governor, E&T Division | UI Project | MIS, FU, UI, ES, Other | NCEP | JTPA | N/A |
| S.C. Office of Governor, E&T Division | UI Project for SDAs | MIS, UI | Admin | JTPA | N/A |
| Seattle-King County PIC (Seattle, WA) | Follow-up Analysis | FU | Admin | Priv | PIC hired consultant to analyze 13-week follow-up outcomes, focusing on factors affecting job retention, earnings and other quality measures. |
| Pentad, Inc. (Wenatchee, WA) | Analysis of Non-Retention | MIS, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Acad | Detailed look at causes of non-retention of employment at 13 week follow-up. Potential influences on retention that were examined were client characteristics, program activities, and employment characteristics. |
| Utah Office of Job Training | UI-Follow-Up Study | MIS, FU, UI | NCEP | JTPA, NCEP | Part of NCEP sponsored study. Purpose is to 1) Study pre/post JTPA earnings 2) explore earnings differences by sub-group and type of services provided 3) compare results of 13-week follow-up with UI data analysis. |
| Idaho Dept. of Employment | Study of UI Wage and Follow-up Data | MIS, FU, UI | NCEP | JTPA | NCEP-sponsored study to examine earnings patterns of terminees using UI wage data, explore differences by sub-group, compare earnings by type of services, and compare JTPA follow-up data with UI wage data. |
| KDK Training, Emp. & Bus. Services (Geneva, IL) | Monthly Tracking of Program Data | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | To report monthly progress and patterns shown by MIS data. |
| Susquehanna E&T Corp. (Harrisburg, PA) | Monthly MIS Analysis of Suppl. Ed. Grant | MIS | Set | JTPA | Monthly analysis of SEG reviews five indicators set by the state: expenditure rates, completion rate for literacy components, regression model performance for skills training, expenditure rate for literacy, expenditure rate for public institutions. |
| Susquehanna E&T Corp. (Harrisburg, PA) | Monthly Regression Model Analysis | MIS | Admin | JTPA | The regression model gives overall evaluation of SDA effort, including service levels to client groups, outcomes, and need to adjust service delivery. |
| Baltimore Office of Employment Devel. | Performance Review | MIS | Admin | JTPA | Monthly review of SDA programs. Performance reviewed by strategy to determine effectiveness and spot potential problem areas. Enrollment, completion and termination rates and wages reviewed along with fiscal expenditure data. |
| Portland PIC (Portland, OR) | Activity Study | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA | N/A |
| Susquehanna E&T Corp. (Harrisburg, PA) | Follow-up Analysis | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA, Acad | We have just begun analysis for past two years of follow-up data. We hope it will help us in targeting employers. |
| S.E. TN PIC (Chattanooga, TN) | Program Effectiveness Analysis | MIS, FU | Admin | JTPA, Priv | JASR data used to determine planned versus actual levels of service to different target groups, performance outcomes and expenditures for the program years. |
| MT Dept. of Labor & Industry | MIS Special Data Collection | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Rsrch | MT MIS collects data on 8 age groups, 5 races, and 12 special participant characteristics. Analysis is used by PICs to design their request-for-proposals and by operators to plan special projects. |

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
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| Central WI PIC (Wisconsin Rapids, WI) | Monthly Report | MIS | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Report conveys expenditures, enrollments and placements (general and by target groups) broken out by subgrantees. Also aggregate SDA performance in relation to perf. standards. Distributed to PIC, LEOs and others. |
| SDA #7 Chicago, IL | Review of Follow-Up System | MIS, FU, Quest | Admin | JTPA | Review of follow-up system to insure that the 70% requirement be met. |

## ISSUE AREA: Miscellaneous Evaluation-Related Activities

| Agency Name | Evaluation Activity | Information Sources | Funding Sources | Staffing Sources | Description of Evaluation Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WA Employment Security Dept. | JTPA Evaluation Model | N/A | Admin, DOL | JTPA, Rsrch, Priv | To identify long-term evaluation needs of both state and SDAs, establish evaluation priorities and identify responsibilities to develop statewide evaluation plan. |
| PIC of Kennewick, WA | Dev. of PIC Evaluation Comm. | N/A | Admin | JTPA, PIC | N/A |
| PIC of Kennewick, WA | Welfare and Needs Assessment Studies | MIS, FU, LMI, Docs, Quest | | Acad | N/A |
| Wayne County PIC (Livonia, MI) | SDA Policies/ Practices | Docs | Admin, 6% | JTPA, Monit, Priv | PIC reviewed state instruction letters to identify need for local policies. New policies being developed and reviewed and intensive monitoring systems developed. |
| NE Job Training Program Division | Quarterly Performance Analysis | MIS, FU, DOcs | Admin | JTPA | Quarterly analysis used in program management and general reporting. |
| Kankakee Valley Job Training Program (Valparaiso, IN) | Analysis of Adult/Youth Services | MIS, LMI, Docs | Admin | JTPA | Overall evaluation of service delivery with respect to content of job training plan; target groups served vs. incidence in population; uses of 10%; sic and soc code placement analysis compared to local LMI; and coordination with other agencies. Info used to redefine/revise agency mission and goals. |
| VA Governor's E&T Dept. | Special Evaluation & Policy Studies | MIS, FU, Wel, UI, Quest | Admin, Agency | | Includes interagency coordination survey of JTPA and welfare systems; UI follow-up study sponsored by NCEP; system support for continued use of UI and follow-up data; and reports perf. standards and analyzing additional effectiveness measures in relation to implemented policies. |
| KDK Training, Emp. & Bus. Services (Geneva, IL) | LMI Analysis | LMI, ES | Admin | JTPA | Goes beyond basic ES data to give SDA a more detailed analysis of data, including population/employment ratios. |
| KDK Training, Emp. & Bus. Services (Geneva, IL) | Analysis of Occupations/ Industries | LMI, ES | Admin | JTPA | Profiles each county's industries and occupations and changes since last census. Attempts to develop unemployment rate for each major occupation. |
| V.L.F.-PIC (Daytona Beach, FL) | General Effectiveness Study | MIS, FU, LMI, Wel, Docs, Quest | Admin, Set, Agency | JTPA, Monit, Agency | To insure placement and training needs of clients are met through the most effective means. |
| Puerto Rico Right to Employment Admin. | SDA and Sub-recipient Evaluation | MIS, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | New state level administrative agency is planning to develop statewide process evaluations of SDAs and subrecipients under new research unit. |
| Business Services Corp. (Gulfport, MS) | Analysis of Regression Model | MIS, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Acad | Given state's illiteracy rate and economy, an analysis of DOL regression model is planned to determine if the model contains bias that works against SDAs or if SDAs can better plan their activities. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WSOS Community Action Commission (Fremont, OH) | Subcontractor Evaluation | MIS, FU, Docs | Admin | JTPA, Monit | This study is prepared annually and covers all subcontractors. Results influences subcontractor selection for the following year. |
| Mid-Willamette Jobs Council (Salem, OR) | Strategic Evaluation and Planning | MIS, FU, LMI, UI, ES, Docs, Quest, Other | 6% | JTPA, Agency, Rsrch, Priv | Evaluation as part of strategic planning process to review performance, examine current services and project future needs of participants and employers. Results of analysis will be used to modify service delivery system to meet needs of both participants and employers. |
| Business Services Corp. (Gulfport, MS) | Study of SDA boundaries | LMI, Other | Admin | JTPA, Acad | A boundary-related study of state's 3 SDAs. Goal is to expand smaller SDAs and create new ones to provide greater local participation. |
| SDA I, Trenton, MO | Study of Economic Development Activities | Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA | Determined if economic development activities supported by the PIC were linked to jobs created or saved. Resulted in decision to continue funding development activities. |
| Saginaw Midland Bay JTC (Saginaw, MI) | Subgrantee Evaluation | MIS, FU, Quest | Admin, 6%, Set | JTPA, Monit, Priv | Subgrantee evaluation using locally adjusted standards based on client termination outcomes. |
| SDA I, Trenton, MO | Survey of PIC Training Philosophy | Quest | Admin | JTPA | Surveyed PIC members on job training philosophy. Results used in constructing Job Training Plan. |
| TN Dept. of Labor | Quarterly and Annual Program Evaluation | MIS, FU, LMI, Wel, UI, ES, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | Implementing a more comprehensive quarterly evaluation to determine causes of poor program performance and predict poor performance before it occurs, allowing for more timely suggestions for corrective action. An annual evaluation based on quarterly findings will direct policy and procedure. |
| DuPage PIC (Wheaton, IL) | Program Reviews | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | The review covers range of issues including enrollments, terminations, placements, E.E.O. issues, paperwork, and general operational issues. Conferences are held with each subcontractor. Information is used to determine deficiencies and develop recommendations for improving programs. |
| WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations | Assessment of Local LMI Activities | ES, Docs, Quest | 6% | JTPA | Study reviews the LMI system and how it's used in SDAs. Resulted in specific recommendations related to improving state agency coordination and establishing clearer SDA information priorities for LMI. |
| PIC of Passaic County (Clifton, NJ) | General Program Review | MIS, FU, Quest | Admin | JTPA | This review is designed to insure that program results are consistent with program intent. Review considers not only employment outcomes, but also program composition, enrollment periods, and consistency. |
| PIC of Passaic (Clifton, NJ) | Internal Operations Review | MIS, Wel, Docs | Admin | JTPA | We review information available in different parts of the organization to insure both compliance and consistency. With hard-to-serve and mandatory service levels, this form of monitoring is integral to the system. |
| Larimer County E&T Services (Fort Collins, CO) | Monthly/Quarterly monitoring reports | MIS, FU, Docs | Admin | JTPA | MIS reports, fiscal reports, and follow-up studies are reviewed on a consistent basis to evaluate program effectiveness. |
| Northern L. Winnebago PIC (Appleton, WI) | Review of Program Operators | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit | To monitor the effectiveness of all program operators as to their effectiveness in reaching goals established by the governor and JTPA performance standards. |
| AR Employment Security Division | Performance Evaluation | MIS, FU, LMI, UI, Quest, DOL Model | Admin, 6% | JTPA | Provides the governor with a basis for determining performance levels of service providers, entitlements to rewards and identification of those needing TA or sanctions. |

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| MA Department of E&T | SDA Newsletter | MIS | Admin, Other | Rsrch | Last year the Evaluation Depart. launched a newsletter to make follow-up information and analysis provided to SDAs easier to understand and utilize. The first newsletter explained how to read and interpret data tables on individual SDA programs. The second provided pre- and post-program information on employment, wages, and welfare status. |
| Mid-Willamette Jobs Council (Salem, OR) | Youth Competency System Development | Docs, other | N/A | JTPA, Monit | To develop a basic skills competency curriculum and benchmarks. State-wide task force used. System developed integrates method of assessment and instruction. |
| Duluth Job Training Prog. (Duluth, MN) | PIC Desk Reviews | MIS, Docs | Admin, Priv | JTPA, Monit, PIC | Monthly desk review by PIC oversight committee. Reviews demographic targeting, outcomes and expenditures using locally developed format. |
| Duluth Job Training Prog. (Duluth, MN) | On-site Reviews | Quest, Onsite | Admin | JTPA, PIC | Subcommittee makes annual on-site visit to all activities; interviews participants and program administrators and staff. Used to identify areas of program effectiveness, improvement and needs that are not being met. |
| Marin County Office of E&T (San Rafael, CA) | Gross Impact Study of Subcontractors | MIS, Wel, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, Monit, Priv | The PIC evaluates selected projects to determine extent contract objectives are being met. Performance is taken into account in future funding. |
| PA Dept. of Labor & Industry | SJTCC Evaluation Subcommittee | MIS, FU, Docs, Quest | Admin | JTPA, SJTCC | SJTCC recently established subcommittee to evaluate JTPA and several special initiatives operating in conjunction with E&T programs. Major purpose will be to evaluate programs' effectiveness and determine how to improve. |
| PA Dept. of Labor & Industry | SDA Evaluation | MIS, FU, Docs | Admin | JTPA | Planned quarterly evaluation of each SDA that will be shared with SDA. SDAs will be assessed in terms of who is being served, how funds are being spent, compliance with perf. standards and overall program effectiveness. |
| Mid-State E&T Consortium (Bellefonte, PA) | Monthly Reports | MIS, FU, Fiscal | Admin | JTPA | Reports examine actual performance and expenditures vs. plan by county for each JTPA grant and for major activities within each grant. Also show actual II-A performance vs. state performance standards and planned vs. actual youth expenditures. |
| IN Department of E&T Services | Performance Standards/Non-JTPA Programs | LMI, ES, UI | Wagner-Peyser | JTPA | Performance outcome measures, standards and models are being developed for Wagner-Peyser and other employment and training programs to establish clear goals for program operators. |
| SDA #7, Chicago, IL | Study of Automated Systems | MIS, Quest | 6% | JTPA, MIS, Priv | To review existing automated system to insure integration with state systems and hardware. |

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